

AMONG THE CANNIBALS

The Fitzroy Edition of
JULES VERNE

Edited by I. O. Evans



A FLOATING CITY
THE BEGUM'S FORTUNE
FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON
DROPPED FROM THE CLOUDS
THE SECRET OF THE ISLAND
MICHAEL STROGOFF
THE DEMON OF CAWNPORE
TIGERS AND TRAITORS
FROM THE EARTH TO THE
MOON
ROUND THE MOON
INTO THE NIGER BEND
THE CITY IN THE SAHARA
20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE
SEA
AT THE NORTH POLE
THE WILDERNESS OF ICE
THE MYSTERY OF ARTHUR
GORDON PYM
With Edgar Allan Poe
JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE
OF THE EARTH
PROPELLER ISLAND
FOR THE FLAG
BLACK DIAMONDS
THE MASTERLESS MAN
THE UNWILLING DICTATOR
THE CLAIM ON FORTY MILE
CREEK
FLOOD AND FLAME
THE CLIPPER OF THE CLOUDS
MASTER OF THE WORLD
CARPATHIAN CASTLE
THE TRIBULATIONS OF A
CHINESE GENTLEMAN
BURBANK THE NORTHERNER
TEXAR THE SOUTHERNER
THE SECRET OF WILHELM
STORITZ
LEADER OF THE RESISTANCE
INTO THE ABYSS
THE MYSTERIOUS DOCUMENT
AMONG THE CANNIBALS

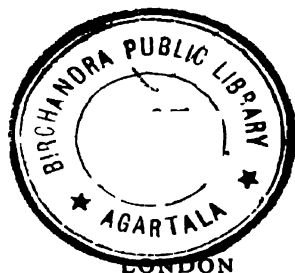
JULES VERNE

Among the Cannibals

Including also the second part of
ON THE TRACK

Part II of
CAPTAIN GRANT'S CHILDREN

Edited by
I. O. EVANS
F.R.G.S.



ARCO PUBLICATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

JULES VERNE'S adventure story, *Captain Grant's Children*, (originally published in Britain as a trilogy, *Voyage Around the World*) describes the attempt of these young people to find their father, who two years previously had failed to return from a voyage south of the Equator. The title of the first volume of this work, *The Mysterious Document*, refers to the discovery which sent them on their quest.

A Scottish nobleman, Lord Glenarvan, is cruising off the Firth of Clyde in his pleasure-yacht, the *Duncan*; he is accompanied by his wife, Lady Helena, and his cousin the imperturbable major MacNabbs: the yacht is commanded by John Mangles who, with all his crew, belongs to Lord Glenarvan's clan. A balance-fish (small shark) has been hauled on deck and slain, and inside its stomach is found a bottle encrusted with a stony material and containing three badly damaged sheets of paper.

These are respectively written in three different languages, but, extremely imperfect though they are, they obviously all contain the same information. One is in English:

	62	Bri	gow
sink			stra
		aland	
	skipp	Gr	
		this docum	of long
and			ssistance
	lost		

Another in German:

7 Juni		Glas
	zwei	atrosen
		graus
		bringt ihnen

And the third in French :

troi	âts	<i>tannia</i>
	gonie	austral
contin	pr	abor
et 37° 11'	lat	cruel indi
		ongit

Translated and pieced together, the message they convey is still incomplete.

June 7th 1862	frigate <i>Britannia</i>	Glasgow
went down	gonie	austral
	by land	two sailors
Captain Gr.		land
contin.	pr.	indi
thrown this paper	cruel	in longitude
and latitude 37° 11'		Take them help
lost		

Lord Glenarvan at once begins an enquiry which shows that the missing ship *Britannia* had been commanded by Captain Grant, and which brings him into touch with the latter's children—Mary, aged sixteen, and the twelve-year Robert. Urged on by his wife, he undertakes a systematic search for their father.

Reasonably enough, he and his friends place the following interpretation on the message :

'On June 7th, 1862, the frigate *Britannia*, of Glasgow, went down on the coast of Patagonia in the austral hemisphere. Going ashore, two sailors and Captain Grant will try to land on the continent, where they will be prisoners of cruel Indians. They have thrown this paper in longitude and latitude 37° 11'. Take them help where they are lost.'

They accordingly made for the western coast of Patagonia at the given latitude. Hardly have they started, however, when they find that the *Duncan* has acquired an unexpected passenger. An erudite but absent-minded French geographer, Jacques Paganel, has mistaken her for a vessel bound for India and taken possession of one of her cabins!

His offer to take part in their quest is gratefully accepted, for his special geographical knowledge will be of real help. As he fully agrees with their interpretation of the document, they land in Patagonia and make enquiries about the shipwreck of the *Britannia*.

Failing to get information on the coast, they decide that the survivors must have been dragged inland by the natives. They therefore cross South America, more or less along the appropriate latitude, continuing their enquiries as they go. They experience many adventures, overcome many difficulties, and escape many dangers, but their quest remains completely fruitless.

Paganel suddenly realises that they had completely misread the document: the French word *gonie* must mean 'agony', and *austral* refers, of course, to Australia! So, after calling at two islands near the assigned latitude, they make for Cape Catastrophe, in South Australia.

Here they are very fortunate in finding a seaman Ayrton, who claims to have been the *Britannia's* quartermaster and to have survived her shipwreck. He encourages them in their quest, and agrees that the best thing will be for them to cross Australia, just as they had South America, along the given latitude.

A waggon is accordingly fitted up with two compartments, one as accommodation for Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant, and the other as a store and a kitchen for the *Duncan's* steward Olbinett. The other men—Lord Glenarvan, Paganel, Major MacNabbs, Robert Grant, Captain Mangles, and two seamen, Wilson and Mulrady—travel on horseback. Ayrton acts as guide with zeal and efficiency, but for some reason MacNabbs has instinctively begun to dislike and distrust him.

At last, without incident except for the sight of a train deliberately wrecked and plundered by escaped convicts, the expedition reaches the gold-mining region of Victoria.

Some years after this book was written, Verne decided that he had left one of its episodes incomplete, and as he had a great dislike of incompleteness in literature, he introduced some of its characters into a later work, *The Secret of the Island*.*

I. O. E.

*Included in the Fitzroy Edition of Jules Verne.

THE MINES AT ALEXANDER MOUNT

IN 1814, Sir Roderick Impey Murchison, one of Britain's foremost geologists and president of the Royal Geographical Society of London, on studying their formation, found remarkable points of resemblance between the Ural Mountains and the chain which runs from north to south, not far from the southern coast of Australia. The Urals being auriferous, the experienced geologist asked himself if the precious metal might not be met within the Australian chain. He was not mistaken: indeed, two years previously some specimens of gold had been sent to New South Wales, and had induced a large number of Cornish miners to emigrate to the auriferous regions of New Holland.

Then miners flocked thither from all points of the globe—Englishmen, Americans, Italians, French, Germans, and Chinese. But it was not until 3rd April, 1851, that a prospector found some rich gold beds, and offered to tell the Governor of Sydney where they were situated, for the modest sum of £500.

His offer was not accepted, but the news of the discovery travelled far and wide. The diggers spread, and the town of Ophir was founded, and soon justified its Biblical name.

Till then, no gold had been found in Victoria; but a few months later, in August 1851, the first gold beds were discovered, and soon four districts were in full activity. At Mount Alexander everything necessary for success was united, and its precious metal attained the highest price in the world's markets.

It was precisely to this place, so fruitful in fatal ruin and un-hoped-for fortunes, that the 37th parallel was leading the travellers.

After having come all day on 31st December along a hilly road that had fatigued oxen and horses, they caught sight of the rounded summits of Mount Alexander. They encamped in a narrow gorge of this little chain, and the animals were allowed to look for food among the blocks of quartz scattered over the

ground. It was not till the next day, the first of 1866, that the waggon grooved its ruts into the roads of this opulent country.

Jacques Paganel and his companions were delighted to see this celebrated mountain, called Geboor in the native language. About eleven they reached the digging centre: a veritable town, with workshops, banking-houses, church, barracks, cottages, and newspaper offices. There are hotels, farms, villas, and even a theatre at ten shillings a seat but much frequented. They were then playing, with great success, a play called *Francis Obadiah, or the Fortunate Digger*. At the end the hero, in despair, drives in his spade for the last time, and finds an enormous nugget.

Glenarvan wanted to see the gold-diggings, and he let the waggon go on before him under Ayrton and Mulrady, meaning to rejoin it a few hours later. Paganel was enchanted with this, and as usual he made himself guide and cicerone to the little troop.

On his advice, they first went to the bank. The streets were wide, macadamised, and carefully watered. Gigantic placards advertising the Gold Company Ltd., the Digger's General Office, or the Nuggets' Union, hung here and there. The noise of machines, washing the sand and pulverising the precious quartz, filled the air.

Beyond the dwellings stretched the 'placers', large tracts of ground given up to the diggings. There the miners were at work, employed and well paid by the various companies. The ground was pierced with holes, and the spades of the army of diggers glittered in the sun. They were men of all nations, not quarrelling but carrying out their task like paid workmen. Organised labour and capital had been substituted for the isolated action of the miner.

'There are some feverish searchers left,' said Paganel. 'I know that most of them let their arms to the companies, and they have to do so, for the auriferous ground is either let or sold by the Government. But there is one scheme left for those who can neither hire nor buy.'

'What is that?' asked Helena.

'The chance of claim "jumping,"' Paganel replied. 'We, who have no claims on these placers, we might, with plenty of luck, make a fortune.'

'But how?' asked the major.

'By claim-jumping, as I told you before.'

'What is claim-jumping?' the major insisted.

'It's an agreement entered into by the miners; it is often the cause of violence and disorder, but the authorities have never been able to abolish it.'

'Go on, Paganel,' said MacNabbs: 'you're making our mouths water.'

'It is agreed that any of this ground which has not been worked for twenty-four hours, holidays excepted, becomes public property. Whoever takes possession of it may dig and become rich, if he is lucky. So, Robert, my boy, if you find one of these neglected workings it is yours.'

'M. Paganel,' said Mary Grant, 'don't put such ideas into my brother's head.'

'I was joking, Miss Mary,' answered Paganel, 'and Robert knows that. He a miner! Never! To dig the ground for the sake of a harvest is one thing, and to dig it for a little gold is another, and a wretched one, and you have to be abandoned by God and man to do it.'

After having visited the principal placers, and looked at the soil that had to be removed, consisting of quartz, clay, slate, and sand, the travellers arrived at the bank.

It was a vast edifice, with the national flag flying above it and Lord Glenarvan was received by the general inspector, who did the honours of the place. This is where the companies deposit the gold, for which they get a receipt. The time was far off when the first diggers had been taken advantage of by the traders of the colony, who paid fifty shillings an ounce for what they sold at sixty-five in Melbourne. The trader, it is true, had the risks of transport, and as highway robbers were plentiful, the escort did not always arrive at its destination. Remarkable specimens of gold were shown to the visitors, and the inspector gave them some details about the different ways of working this metal. It is generally found in two forms, as ore mixed with alluvial earth, or in quartz, and according to the nature of the ground, it is dug for or sought on the surface. The latter is found in the beds of the torrents, or where they have washed it down in valleys or ravines. The other is dug out of the rock.

The visitors, after having looked at the different specimens of gold, went over the mineral museum of the bank. Here they saw all the products of Australian soil ticketed and classified. Gold is not its only wealth; it may be compared to a vast casket, where nature keeps her most precious jewels. In the glass-cases shone the white topaz, the rival of the Brazilian topaz, garnets, rubies, sapphires, and last, though not least, diamonds. Nothing was wanting to complete this collection of precious stones, and the gold was there in which to set them.

After they left the bank, they went back to the placers, where Paganel made his companions laugh by the way he kept his eyes on the ground, picking up a pebble here, a piece of quartz there, examining them carefully, and then throwing them down in disgust.

‘Have you lost anything, Paganel?’ asked the major.

‘Yes,’ said Paganel, ‘in a country of precious stones, we have always lost what we can’t find. I don’t know why, but I should like to carry off a nugget weighing a few ounces, or even twenty pounds—not more.’

‘What would you do with it?’ asked Glenarvan.

‘Oh, I should present it to my country. I should deposit it in the bank of France—’

‘Which would accept it?’

‘Certainly, under the form of railway stock.’

Paganel was congratulated on the way he intended offering his nugget to his country, and Lady Glenarvan hoped he would find one worth having.

After a two-hours’ walk, he saw a decent-looking inn, and suggested that they should sit down there till it was time to go back to the waggon. Lady Glenarvan consented, and, as it would not be an inn without refreshments, Paganel asked the landlord to serve some drink of the country. They brought a ‘nobler’ for each person. The nobler is a glass of grog, but made in the opposite way to the British method. Instead of putting a small glass of brandy into a large glass of water, they put a small glass of water into a large glass of brandy. It was rather too Australian, and to the great astonishment of the landlord, a large decanter

of water was added to the 'nobler', which was thus converted into British grog.

And while they drank, Paganel discoursed on the lust for gold and its evil effects upon the character.

CHAPTER XIII

'THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND GAZETTE'

ON 2ND JANUARY, at sunrise, the travellers were crossing the edge of the gold regions; a few hours later they forded the Colban and Campaspe Rivers, in longitude 144° 35' and 144° 45'. Half of their journey was now completed, and another fortnight as happily passed would find the little troop on the shores of Two-fold Bay.

All of them were well: Paganel's promises about the healthiness of the climate had been realised. There was little or no dampness, and the heat was not too great.

One modification had, however, been made in the order of march since Camden Bridge. As soon as Ayrton knew about the crime on the railway he took some precautions not hitherto needed. The sportsmen were not to lose sight of the waggon, somebody was always to be on guard during the camp, and all the weapons were to be reloaded morning and evening. It was certain that there was a band of malefactors abroad, and though there was nothing to cause immediate fear, it was well to be prepared for anything.

Needless to add that these precautions were taken without the knowledge of Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant, whom they did not wish to frighten. Nor were the travellers alone in taking precautions against the convicts: in the isolated hamlets and stations the inhabitants and squatters closed their houses at nightfall. Dogs were set free in the enclosure, and barked at every footstep. The shepherds on horseback, who assembled their cattle to bring them in for the night, carried a rifle at their saddle-bow. The news of the crime committed at Camden Bridge made many a colonist, who hitherto had always slept with doors and windows open, bolt and bar his door at sunset.

The very administration of the province gave evidence of zeal and prudence. Detachments of native policemen were sent into country. Hitherto the mail-coach had always run without any escort, but that day, when Glenarvan's troop was crossing the road from Kilmore to Heatcore, the mail galloped past in a cloud of dust, but not too quickly to make it clear that the mounted policemen were accompanying it. It seemed like going back to the fatal time when the discovery of the first gold threw the scum of Europe into the Australian continent.

One mile further on the waggon entered the first forest that the travellers had seen since leaving Cape Bernouilli. The sight of the eucalyptus trees evoked a cry of admiration; they were 200 feet high, their spongy bark was five inches thick, and their trunks, trickling with odorous resin, measured twenty feet round, and were 150 feet high. They were straight and smooth, and looked like so many columns, and their tops spread out into gyrose branches, with alternate leaves at their ends, and a single flower, with a calyx like an inverted urn.

Under this green sky the air circulated freely; incessant ventilation absorbed the dampness of the ground; horses, oxen, and waggon could pass comfortably between these trees, which made the forest look very different from those through which a way has to be cut by pioneers. A carpet of grass at the feet of the trees, a cloth of verdure at their summits, long perspectives of columns, though little shade and coolness, an unusual light like that coming through transparent tissues, all constituted a strange spectacle, rich in new effects. The forest of this continent is nothing like those of the New World. If the shade is not great nor the darkness profound under these domes of verdure, it is because these trees show a curious anomaly in the structure of their leaves. They turn sideways to the sun, and the light streams through them to the ground, as through the laths of a Venetian blind. All the travellers noticed this, and Paganel was asked the reason.

'What astonishes me here,' said he, 'is not the queeriness of nature—nature knows what she is about—but that the botanists do not always know what they are talking about. Nature has not made a mistake in giving a special kind of foliage to these trees, but men have in calling them "eucalyptus."'

'What does the word mean?' asked Mary Grant.

'It comes from *eu kalypso* and means "I cover well." They took care to make the mistake in Greek, so that it should not be so apparent, but it is clear that the eucalyptus covers badly.'

'Granted, Paganel,' answered Glenarvan. 'Now tell us why the leaves grow like that.'

'For a purely physical reason,' answered Paganel. 'In this country, where the air is dry, rain is rare, and the ground arid, trees have no need either of sun or of air. Moisture failing, sap fails too. The leaves are narrow to keep them from being too rapidly evaporated by the sun. That is why they turn their profile to its light. There is nothing more intelligent than a leaf.'

'And nothing more selfish!' added the major. 'These think only of themselves, and not at all of the travellers.'

They were all of MacNabbs' opinion except Paganel who, even while wiping his forehead, congratulated himself on travelling under trees that cast no shade. However, much as it is to be regretted, nothing protects the traveller against the heat in these forests, which often take a long time to cross.

Throughout that day the waggon rolled on amongst the eucalyptus and met neither animal nor native. In the evening they encamped at the foot of one of the giant trees that bore marks of a recent fire: it was like a tall factory chimney, for the flame had hollowed it out from top to bottom. (This custom of the squatters and natives will end by destroying these magnificent trees, and they will disappear like the cedars of Lebanon.) Olbinett, following Paganel's advice, lighted his fire for supper in this tubular trunk: it drew well, and the smoke was lost amongst the foliage. They took the necessary precautions for the night, and the men took it in turns to watch till daybreak.

During the whole of 3rd January, the long avenues of the interminable forest stretched on before the travellers, who thought they were never going to end. But, towards evening, the trees were not so thick, and a few miles away, in a little plain, appeared a group of houses.

'Seymour!' cried Paganel; 'that's the last town we shall meet with before leaving Victoria.'

'Is it important?' asked Helena.

'It's a mere parish,' Paganel replied, 'and it's on its way to becoming a municipality.'

'Shall we find a decent hotel there?' asked Glenarvan.

'I hope so,' the geographer answered.

'Well, we'll enter the town. I daresay the ladies won't be sorry to stay a night there.'

'No,' said Helena, 'unless it will cause any inconvenience or delay.'

'It will not,' Glenarvan assured her. 'The oxen and horses are tired; tomorrow we'll set out again at daybreak.'

It was nine o'clock and darkness was gradually setting in. They entered the wide streets of Seymour under the direction of Paganel, who always seemed to know perfectly well places he had never seen: his instinct guided him, and he went straight to Campbell's North British Hotel. Horses and oxen were taken to the stables, the waggon put under a shed, and the travellers led to fairly comfortable rooms. By ten they were all seated round the supper table; Paganel had just come in from going round the town with Robert, and related his adventures very laconically: he had seen nothing whatever.

A less absent-minded man would have noticed some disturbance in the streets of Seymour; groups were gathering here and there, and gradually getting larger; people were talking at their house-doors, and questioning one another in obvious anxiety. The evening papers were being read aloud and discussed. These symptoms could not escape the least attentive observer, and yet Paganel had seen nothing.

The major, without going so far, without even going out of the hotel, had heard the news that convulsed the little town. Ten minutes' conversation with the loquacious Dickson, the landlord of the inn, explained matters, but he did not say a word about it. It was not until the supper was over, and the ladies and Robert had gone to bed, that he told his companions: 'They've found out who committed that crime on the Sandhurst railway.'

'Have they been arrested?' Ayrton enquired sharply.

'No,' the major answered, without appearing to notice the quartermaster's eagerness, 'eagerness justified by the circumstances.'

'That's a pity,' Ayrton commented.



'Well,' asked Glenarvan, 'whom do they attribute the crime to?'

'Read,' the major handed Glenarvan a copy of the *Australian and New Zealand Gazette*, 'and you'll see that the inspector of police had made no mistake.'

Glenarvan read that, according to the coroner's inquest at Camden Bridge, the crime was attributed to a gang of convicts who had escaped six months before from Perth station, in West Australia, as they were being transferred to Norfolk Island. It was composed of twenty-nine convicts, commanded by a certain Ben Joyce, a most dangerous malefactor, who had arrived in Australia some months before, it was not known by what ship, and whom justice had never been able to seize.

When Glenarvan had finished, McNabbs turned to the geographer and said—'You see, Paganel, there *are* convicts in Australia.'

'Escaped convicts, yes, that's clear,' answered Paganel; 'but there are none admitted regularly. Those fellows had no right to be here.'

'Right or not, here they are,' Glenarvan reminded him. 'The question is, ought their presence to modify our plans and stop our journey. What do you think, John?'

The captain did not answer at once, he was hesitating between the grief it would cause the two children to abandon the search for their father and the fear of endangering the expedition.

'If Lady Glenarvan and Miss Grant weren't with us,' he said, 'I should care very little about this band of convicts.'

Glenarvan understood him, and replied: 'Of course there's no question of giving up the search; but perhaps it would be prudent to rejoin the *Duncan* at Melbourne, and then go east on the track of Captain Grant. What do you think, MacNabbs?'

'I should like to know Ayrton's opinion before I decide,' answered the major.

Thus directly addressed, the quartermaster looked at Glenarvan.

'I think,' he said, 'that we're two hundred miles from Melbourne, and that the danger, if it exists, is as great on the route to the south as the east. Both are little frequented; one is as good

as the other. Besides, I don't think eight well-armed and resolute men need fear a band of thirty malefactors.'

'Well spoken, Ayrton,' answered Paganel. 'By going on we might discover some traces of Captain Grant, which we shouldn't do if we went southwards. I agree with you, and I think these convicts aren't worth giving a thought too.'

Thereupon the suggestion not to alter their programme was put to the vote.

'My lord,' said Ayrton, as they were going to separate for the night, 'wouldn't it be as well to send word to the *Duncan* to join you on the east coast?'

'What would be the use?' Mangles asked. 'It will be time to send the order when we get to Twofold Bay. If anything forced us to go to Melbourne, we might regret that we had sent the *Duncan* away. Besides, the damage she sustained cannot have been repaired yet. I think we had better wait.'

'Very well,' Ayrton did not insist.

Next day the little troop, armed and ready for anything, left Seymour, and, half an hour later, they again entered the eucalyptus forest.

Glenarvan would have preferred to travel in open country, where ambushes would not be so practicable, but there was no choice, and the waggon moved on all day amongst the tall, monotonous trees. In the evening, after crossing the 146th meridian, they encamped on the verge of the Murray district.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MAJOR'S MONKEYS

NEXT MORNING, January 5th, the travellers set foot on the vast Murray territory, the least known and least frequented of the province. Its forests will eventually fall under the bushman's axe and its meadows be given up to the squatter's flocks and herds, but at present it is virgin soil, just as it emerged from the Indian Ocean.

This territory bears a significative name on the English maps, that of 'Reserve for the Blacks.' It is there that the natives have been brutally thrust by the colonists. They have been left in dis-

tant plains, under inaccessible woods, in regions where the native races will drag out the short remaining period of their miserable existence. Any white man, colonist, emigrant, squatter, or bushman, may cross the boundary of these reserves—the blacks alone must never leave them.

‘Fifty years ago,’ said Paganel, as he rode along, ‘we should have met with many tribes of natives along our route, and as yet we have not met with one. In another century there won’t be a black left.’

‘The reserve seemed, indeed, to be quite deserted, and not a trace of an encampment or a hut was to be seen. Plains and woods succeeded one another, and by degrees the country began to look wild. It seemed as if no living thing, either man or animal, frequented these distant regions, when Robert, stopping in front of an eucalyptus copse, shouted—

‘A monkey! There’s a monkey!’ And he pointed to a large black body which was gliding from branch to branch with surprising agility; it passed from one tree to another, as if sustained in the air by some membranous apparatus. In this strange country, did monkeys fly, like those foxes to whom Nature had given bat’s wings?

The waggon stopped, and they watched the animal, which gradually disappeared in the top of the eucalyptus. Soon they saw it descend with the rapidity of lightning, run along the ground with a thousand contortions, and then seize with its long arms the smooth trunk of an enormous gum-tree. They wondered how it was going to climb the straight slippery trunk, which its grip could not encircle. But the monkey made little notches in it with a sort of axe, and, by stepping on them, it reached the branches; in a few seconds it had disappeared amongst the foliage.

‘What sort of a monkey can that be?’ exclaimed the major.

‘That monkey,’ answered Paganel, ‘is an Australian, *pur sang!*’

The companions of the geographer had not time to shrug their shoulders when cries of ‘Coo-eeh! Coo-eeh!’ were heard a little way off. Ayrton urged on his oxen, and, a hundred paces farther on, the travellers found themselves in a native encampment.

The spectacle was sad. About a dozen tents stood on the naked ground. These *gunyos*, made with strips of bark, barely sheltered

their miserable inhabitants on one side. These beings, degraded by misery, were repulsive-looking: there were about thirty of them, men, women, and children, clothed in kangaroo-skins, which hung in rags. Their first movement on seeing the waggon was to fly; but a few words from Ayrton, pronounced in an unintelligible jargon, seemed to reassure them. They then came timidly back like animals to whom some tempting piece of meat is offered.

These natives, from five feet four inches to five feet seven inches high, were the colour of soot; they had flaky hair, long arms, prominent stomachs, and hairy bodies, covered with tattoo marks and the scars from the cuts they inflicted upon themselves in their funeral ceremonies. Nothing could be more horrible than these miserable inhabitants, with their ugly faces, their flattened noses and prominent lower jaws, armed with white but projecting teeth. No other human creatures present a type so purely animal.

‘Robert was not mistaken,’ said the major, ‘they are monkeys—*pur sang*, if you like—but certainly monkeys.’

‘Cousin,’ Lady Glenarvan asked him gently, ‘do you think it right, then, that they should be hunted like wild beasts? The poor things are men!’

‘Men!’ cried MacNabbs. ‘At the best they are only intermediary between men and ourang-outangs! I am sure, if I measured their facial angle, I should find it as small as a monkey’s.’

MacNabbs was right. The facial angle of the Australian is very sharp, and, like the ourang-outang’s, measures sixty to sixty-two degrees. It was not without reason that one anthropologist wanted to classify these poor creatures as *pithecomorphes*—men in the form of monkeys.

Lady Glenarvan and Miss Grant had left the waggon, and were offering food to the natives, who swallowed it with repulsive greediness. The blacks might have taken these charitable ladies for divinities, as their religion teaches them that the blacks become white after their death.

But it was the native women who most excited the pity of the two English ladies. Nothing is comparable to their condition; nature has refused them the least charm, they are natural slaves, and the only wedding-presents they get are blows from the

waddie, a stick all their masters carry. They become prematurely old, and have all the painful work of their wandering life to do; they have to carry not only their children rolled up in a packet of willows, but the hunting and fishing implements, and the supply of *phormium tenax*, with which they make nets. They get food for the family, catch lizards, opossums, and serpents, sometimes at the summit of the trees: cut the wood for fuel, and the bark for the tents; poor beasts of burden, they never rest, and all they eat, after their masters, is the worst of the food.

At that moment some of these miserable creatures—famishing, perhaps—were trying to catch birds by offering them corn. They were lying on the scorching ground as motionless as the dead, and had been waiting, perhaps for hours, till some bird came within reach of their hands. This was the only trap they knew, and none but Australian birds would ever let themselves be caught in it.

Meantime, the male natives surrounded the travellers, who had to protect themselves against their pillaging instincts. They speak a hissing dialect, formed by clapping the tongue and resembling animal cries. Their voice, however, often has soft inflections; the word *nokie*, *nokie*, often repeated, was accompanied by gestures that translated it to mean 'give, give.' They asked for everything. Olbinett had much difficulty in defending the luggage compartment, and especially the food supplies. The poor famished creatures looked imploringly at the contents of the waggon, and Glenarvan gave orders to distribute some food to them. The natives understood him, and gave themselves up to demonstrations which would have moved the hardest heart. They roared like beasts in a menagerie when they receive their daily ration.

Olbinett first gave food to the women, but they dared not eat before their dreaded masters, who threw themselves upon the biscuit and dried meat like wild animals upon a prey.

When Mary Grant thought that her father might be a prisoner amongst such natives, her eyes filled with tears. John Mangles, who was watching her anxiously, guessed the thoughts which filled her heart, and anticipated her wish by questioning the quartermaster of the *Britannia*.

'Ayrton, were the natives you were amongst like these?'

'Yes, captain,' Ayrton replied. 'All these tribes are alike. Only

there all you can see is a handful, whilst on the banks of the Darling the tribes are numerous, and commanded by a powerful chief.'

'But what can a European do among these natives?' Mangles asked.

'What I did myself,' Ayrton replied. 'He hunts and fishes with them, takes part in their wars, and, as I have already told you, is treated according to the services he can render; and if he is at all brave and intelligent, he soon holds a good position in the tribe.'

'But he is a prisoner,' said Mary.

'And is closely watched day and night,' added Ayrton.

'But, Ayrton, you managed to get away,' the major joined in the conversation.

'Yes, Mr. MacNabbs: during a fight between my tribe and a neighbouring one I succeeded, and I don't regret it. But if it had to be done again, I believe I should prefer eternal slavery to the tortures I endured in crossing the deserts of the interior. God keep the captain from attempting that!'

'Yes, certainly,' John Mangles answered, 'we must hope, Miss Mary, that your father is kept prisoner by some native tribe. We should find traces of him more easily than if he were wandering through the forests.'

'You still hope, then?' asked the girl.

'I hope one day to see you happy, Miss Mary, with God's help!'

Mary Grant's tearful eyes alone could thank the young captain.

During this conversation an unusual commotion broke out among the savages; they were shouting and running with their weapons in their hands and apparently in a fury.

Glenarvan did not know what to think of it, so the major asked Ayrton what it meant, and added: 'As you've lived among the Australians, you no doubt know their language.'

'Every tribe has a different idiom,' answered the quartermaster, 'but I can make out that, out of gratitude, they're going to treat you to a sham fight.'

The natives thereupon began the attack with well-feigned fury—so well-feigned, indeed, that, without knowing this beforehand, it might have been taken for reality. But the Australians are excellent mimics, and now they displayed their remarkable talents.

Their instruments of attack and defence consist of a club and a sort of tomahawk, a very sharp stone fixed between two sticks with gum. With a handle ten feet long, it is a formidable weapon of war, and a useful implement of peace: it brings down branches and heads, and cuts away trees or bodies, according to circumstances.

All these weapons were brandished in frantic hands amidst noisy vociferations. The combatants threw themselves upon one another; some fell as if dead; others uttered the victors' shout. The women, especially the old ones, possessed with the demon of war, urged them on, threw themselves on the dead, and mutilated them with a ferocity which could not have been more horrible had it been real. The children, amongst whom the little girls were the most fierce, thumped each other with ferocious venom.

This sham fight had lasted about ten minutes, when the combatants suddenly stopped. The weapons dropped from their hands, and a complete silence succeeded the tumult. The natives stayed fixed in their last attitude, as though petrified.

The reason they had stopped was soon clear: a flock of cockatoos was flying over the gum-trees. They were filling the air with their cries, and the bright tints of their plumage made them look like a flying rainbow. It was the appearance of this bright flight of birds that had interrupted the fight. One of the natives seized an implement, of a peculiar shape, and painted red, left his motionless companions, and crept amongst the trees and bushes towards the flock of cockatoos. He did this so noiselessly that he neither touched a leaf nor displaced a pebble: he moved like a shadow.

When he had reached the proper distance, he threw his implement in a horizontal direction two feet from the ground. It flew for about forty feet, then suddenly, without touching the ground, it sprang up perpendicularly 100 feet in the air, struck a dozen birds mortally, and, describing a parabola, fell back at the native's feet.

Glenarvan and his companions were struck dumb with astonishment; they could not believe their eyes.

'It's the boomerang,' Paganel exclaimed, 'the Australian boomerang!

And, like a child, he ran to pick up the marvellous implement to see 'what was inside.'

This boomerang consisted of a piece of hard bent wood, from thirty to forty inches long. It was about three inches thick in the middle, and it terminated in sharp points. Its convex side had two very sharp edges, and it was as simple as it was incomprehensible.

'This, then, is the famous boomerang!' Paganel attentively examined the strange implement. 'Only a piece of wood, and nothing more. What could make it spring up all at once from its horizontal course, and return to the hand that threw it? Neither savants nor travellers have ever given any explanation of this phenomenon.'

'Isn't it something like a hoop which, when hurled in the proper way, comes back to the point it started from?' John Mangles suggested.

'Or like a billiard-ball struck in a certain way!' added Glenarvan.

'Not at all,' Paganel replied: 'in both these cases there is a support which produces the reaction—the ground for the hoop and the table for the ball. But here there is none; the implement does not touch the ground, and yet it shoots up to a considerable height!'

'But how do you explain it, M. Paganel?' asked Helena.

'I can't explain it at all; I only record it again; the effect is clearly due to the way the boomerang is hurled and its peculiar construction. But the way it is thrown still remains a secret of the Australians.'

'Anyhow, it is very ingenious—for monkeys,' Helena looked at the major, who shook his head as though quite unconvinced.

Meanwhile, time was going, and Glenarvan thought he ought no longer to delay his march eastward; he was going to ask the ladies to go back to their waggon, when a savage ran up to them, and pronounced some words in great excitement.

'They've seen some cassowaries,' Ayrton explained.

'Are they going to hunt them, then?' asked Glenarvan.

'We must see that,' cried Paganel. 'It's certain to be very remarkable. Perhaps they'll use the boomerang.'

'What do you think, Ayrton?'

'It won't take long, my lord,' the quartermaster assured him.

The natives had not lost an instant. It was a stroke of good fortune for them to kill cassowaries, which would assure them food for several days. Their hunters need all their skill, but how, without guns, were they going to bring down, and, without dogs, to reach, so agile an animal?

The emu, or cassowary, called *moureuk* by the natives, is beginning to get rare in the plains of Australia. It is a large bird about two and a half feet high, and has white flesh very much like that of the turkey; its head has a horny covering, its eyes are light brown, and its beak is bent from top to bottom; its feet have three toes, armed with powerful nails; its wings are nothing but stumps, and it cannot use them for flying: its plumage is darkened on the neck and chest. But although it does not fly, it can run and beat the fleetest horse on the turf, so that it can be taken only by stratagem. That is why, at the call of the native, ten of the Australians enrolled themselves into a band of skirmishers on a plain where the indigo grew wild and turned the ground blue with its flowers. The travellers stopped on the borders of a wood of mimosas.

At the approach of the natives half a dozen birds rose, took flight, and alighted about a mile off. When the hunter of the tribe had noticed their position, he signed to his comrades to stop. They lay down on the ground, whilst he, taking from his net two cassowary skins skilfully sewn together, put them on. He raised his right arm above his head, imitating the movement of the bird seeking its food.

The native advanced towards the flock, sometimes stopping and pretending to peck grains, sometimes raising the dust with his feet. The stratagem was perfect, as nothing could be a more faithful imitation. He arrived thus, imitating the cry of the birds, into the very midst of the flock, when he suddenly brandished his club, so that five birds fell around him. The hunter had succeeded, and the hunt was over.

Then Glenarvan and his friends took leave of the natives, who showed little regret at the parting. Perhaps the success of their cassowary hunt had made them forget how their excessive hunger had been satisfied. They lacked even the gratitude of the stomach, more lively than that of the heart amongst savages and animals.

'Now, cousin,' Lady Glenarvan asked the major, 'you will agree that Australians are not monkeys.'

'Because they can imitate an animal perfectly?' replied the major. 'On the contrary, that justifies my view.'

'A joke isn't an answer,' said Helena. 'You must admit that you were wrong.'

'Well, then, yes, or rather, no. Australians are not monkeys, but monkeys are Australians. You remember what negroes say about the orang-outangs?'

'No, what?' asked Helena.

'They say that they never speak because they don't want to work, so at least said a jealous negro about an orang-outang that his master had fed.'

CHAPTER XV

MILLIONAIRE CATTLE-BREEDERS

AFTER A quiet night passed in longitude 146° 15', the travellers, at six in the morning on January 6th, continued their journey across the vast region. They twice crossed the tracks of squatters going northwards, and the different footprints would have got mixed had not Glenarvan's horse left the imprint of his Black Station shoes upon the plain. They had to cross many temporary creeks which came down from the sides of the Buffalo Ranges, a chain of hills whose picturesque outline undulated on the horizon.

They decided to encamp that evening. Ayrton urged on his team, and, after a day's journey of thirtyfive miles, the oxen were rather fatigued. The tent was set up under the large trees, night came, and supper was quickly eaten. After such a journey, they thought less of eating than of sleeping.

Paganel, who took the first watch, gun on shoulder, marched up and down the encampment to keep himself awake.

In spite of the absence of the moon, the night was nearly luminous with the light of the southern constellations. The savant amused himself with reading the grand book of the firmament, so interesting to those who understand it. He was thus more con-

cerned with the sky than with the earth when a distant sound awoke him from his reverie. He listened attentively, and, to his great astonishment, he thought he recognised the sound of a piano; some arpeggio chords reached his ear; he could not mistake them.

‘A piano in the desert!’ Paganel said to himself. ‘I can’t believe that.’

It was, in fact, very surprising, and Paganel preferred to believe that some strange Australian bird was imitating the sounds of an Erard or a Broadwood than that he was listening to a production of their factories. But then a clear voice was heard singing to the pianoforte accompaniment; Paganel listened without giving in to the evidence of his senses. A few moments later he was forced to recognise the sublime air that reached his ear—it was *Il mio tesoro tanto*, from Don Juan.

‘*Parbleu!*’ exclaimed the Frenchman, ‘Australian birds may be musicians, but they cannot sing Mozart!’

Then he listened to the master’s sublime inspiration till it ended. The effect of the sweet melody in the still starlight night was indescribable: he long remained under the charm of the music; then the voice stopped, and silence resumed its reign.

When Wilson came to relieve Paganel, he found him plunged in a profound reverie. Paganel said nothing to the sailor, though he meant to tell Glenarvan about it the next morning.

They were awakened the next day by an unexpected barking outside the tent. Glenarvan at once rose. Two magnificent pointers were coursing on the borders of a small wood, and at the approach of the travellers they barked louder than ever.

‘Can there be a station in this desert,’ Glenarvan wondered, ‘and sportsmen as well as their dogs?’

Paganel was just going to describe his impressions of the previous night when two young men appeared, mounted on superb English hunters. They were clothed in elegant shooting costume, and they stopped at the sight of the little troop encamped gipsy-fashion. They seemed to be asking themselves what was the meaning of the presence of armed men in that neighbourhood, when they noticed the ladies descending from the waggon.

As soon as they had dismounted, they went up to them, hat in hand. Glenarvan met them, and as the newcomer he gave his

name. The young men bowed, and the elder of the two said—
‘My lord, will you and your companions do us the honour of resting a little in our house? We are Michael and Sandy Patterson, owners of the Hottam Station. You’re on the station land now, and you’ve only a quarter of a mile to go.’

‘Gentlemen,’ answered Glenarvan, ‘we have no right to take advantage of your hospitality.’

‘By accepting it, my lord, you will oblige poor exiles who are only too glad to do the honours of the desert.’

Glenarvan bowed in consent.

‘Sir,’ said Paganel, addressing Michael Patterson, ‘may I ask if you are the gentleman who was singing that divine air of Mozart’s yesterday?’

‘Yes, sir,’ the gentleman answered, ‘and my cousin Sandy was accompanying me.’

‘Well, sir,’ continued Paganel, ‘receive the sincere compliments of a Frenchman, and a passionate lover of music.’

Then Michael Patterson pointed out the direction they were to follow. The horses were left in the care of Ayrton and the sailors, and the travellers, talking and expressing their admiration, went on foot with their young hosts to Hottam Station.

It really was a magnificent place, kept up with the rigorous severity of an English park. Immense meadows, surrounded by grey palisades, extended as far as eye could reach. Oxen were grazing by thousands and sheep by millions.

Long avenues of evergreen trees stretched in all directions, and here and there were shrubbies of grass-trees, bushes ten feet high, similar to the dwarf-palm, with long narrow leaves. The air was filled with the scent of the mint-laurel; its white flowers, then in bloom, gave out the finest aromatic perfume.

The transplanted productions of European climates were mixed with the native trees. Peach, pear, apple, fig, and orange-trees, even the oak, were recognised with delight by the travellers, who saw birds in their native trees they never knew before. Amongst others the satin-bird, with its soft plumage, and the sericules, clothed in gold and black velvet. They also saw, for the first time, the lyre-bird, whose tail is shaped like Orpheus’ graceful instrument.

Meanwhile Glenarvan was listening to the two young Patter-

sons, who were telling him their history. It was that of many young, intelligent, and industrious Englishmen, who do not think that the possession of riches exempts them from work. They were the son and the nephew of a London banker. When they had attained their majority, the banker had told them, 'Here are so many thousands, young men. Go to some distant colony and make good use of them. Get experience of life while you work. If you succeed, so much the better; if you fail, there will be no great harm done. I shall not regret a few thousands if they make men of you.'

The two young men had obeyed, and chosen Victoria to found a settlement, and in less than three years it was as prosperous as heart could desire. There are more than 3,000 such stations in southern Australia; some belong to squatters, who raise cattle, others to settlers, whose principal industry is the cultivation of the soil.

The two men were both squatters and settlers, and Hottam Station was now the largest in the country. It was situated at a great distance from the principal towns, in the midst of the little-frequented district of the Murray, and covered an area of nearly fifteen square miles. It was well watered by numerous creeks and tributaries of Owen's River, which runs north into the Murray. Cattle-raising and general farming was succeeding on 10,000 acres of well-cultivated land.

Michael and Sandy Patterson were giving the last of these details when, at the extremity of an avenue of casuarinas, appeared the dwelling-house. It was a charming place, built of wood and bricks, like a chalet, with a verandah from which hung Chinese lanterns. On the lawns and amongst the flower-beds bronze candelabra supported elegant lanterns; at night the whole park was lighted with gas made from a little generator hidden under hickets of arborescent ferns.

None of the out-buildings was situated near the house; they formed a village of twenty houses and huts, a quarter of a mile away in a lone village. Telegraph wires kept the village and house in communication.

The avenue was soon traversed; then an elegant little iron bridge gave access to the park; the doors of the house were brown open, and the guests of Hottam Station were soon in the

sumptuous apartment of their hosts. Here all the luxury of artistic and fashionable life lay before them. They were shown through a hall ornamented with sporting subjects into a large drawing-room with five windows. There they found a piano strewn with classical and modern music, easels with half-finished pictures, brackets with marble statuettes, paintings by Flemish masters on the walls, thick carpets, tapestries embroidered with mythological subjects—in short, everything that could recall the European comforts enjoyed by rich and cultivated people.

Lady Glenarvan walked to one of the windows and was delighted with the view. The house was on a hillside, and overlooked a wide valley that stretched as far as the mountains on the east. Meadows, woods, and hills ‘mixed in one another’s arms,’ to form one pure image of delight. No other landscape in the world could be compared to it, not even the renowned Valley of Paradise on the Norwegian frontiers of Telemarck. The lovely scene changed with the shifting tints produced by the sunlight; it satisfied the utmost dream the most brilliant imagination could form.

While they were lost in admiration, Sandy Patterson had ordered breakfast and, in less than a quarter of an hour after their arrival at the station, the travellers were seated before a sumptuous meal. The dishes and wines were of indisputable quality, but the best sauce was the evident pleasure of the two young hosts at being able to offer their splendid hospitality.

It was not long before they heard all about Glenarvan’s expedition, in which they took a great interest, and they held out great hopes of success to Captain Grant’s children.

‘It’s clear that Captain Grant is in the hands of the natives, as he hasn’t been heard of in the coastal settlements,’ said Michael. ‘He must have been made prisoner directly he landed.’

‘That is precisely what happened to his quartermaster, Ayrton,’ John Mangles replied.

‘Haven’t you heard anything about the shipwreck?’ Helena asked the two young men.

‘Nothing,’ answered Michael.

‘What sort of treatment do you think Captain Grant would receive from the natives?’

‘The Australians are not cruel, Lady Glenarvan,’ the young

'squatter assured her; 'Miss Grant can make her mind easy on that score. There are many instances of their gentle character, and Europeans have lived a long time amongst them without having to complain of their brutality.'

'King, the only survivor of Burke's expedition, amongst others,' said Faganel.

'Yes,' agreed Sandy, 'and an English soldier named Buckley, who deserted from Port Philip in 1803, and lived thirty-three years with the natives.'

'Since then,' added Michael, 'I saw in one of the last numbers of the *Australian Gazette* that a man named Morrill has just been given up to his countrymen after sixteen years' slavery. The same thing happened to him that must have happened to Captain Grant, for he was made prisoner by the natives after the wreck of the *Peruvia* in eighteen fortysix.'

These words gave new hope to the members of the expedition, and delighted Mary and Robert.

After that, when the ladies had left the table, they talked about the convicts. The young squatters knew about the catastrophe at Camden Bridge, but they did not feel any uneasiness about the band of escaped ruffians: these dare not attack a station in which at least a hundred workmen were employed. The young men thought it unlikely that the convicts would venture into the Murray deserts, where there was nothing for them to do, or into the New South Wales colonies, where the routes were well guarded. This was also Ayrton's opinion.

Lord Glenarvan could not decline his amiable young host's invitation to pass the day at Hottam Station. It would make a delay of twelve hours, but this might be put to profitable use as a day of rest for the oxen and horses. When the young men had received his assent, they suggested a programme for the day, and this was accepted with pleasure.

At twelve, seven vigorous hunters were pawing the ground before the doors of the house, and an elegant brake and four-in-hand were there for the ladies. For four hours they hunted in a park as large as some German states; and game abounded. Robert did marvels by the side of Major MacNabbs; he was here, there, and everywhere, always the first to fire, but John Mangles watched over him and this reassured Mary.

They killed several animals peculiar to the country; including the wombat and the bandicoot. The former is herbivorous, and burrows like the badger; it is as large as a sheep, and its flesh is excellent. The bandicoot is a repulsive animal, a foot and a half long, which would give lessons in pillaging farmyards to a European fox. Paganel killed one, and thought it delightful. Amongst other large game Robert skilfully brought down a dasyure viverrin, a sort of small fox with black fur spotted with white, and a couple of opossums, who were hiding in the thick foliage of the large trees.

But the kangaroo hunt was the most interesting part of the proceedings. The dogs, about four, started a band of these strange-looking animals; the young hurriedly re-entered the maternal pouch, and they all ran off in single file. Their hind legs are twice as long as their fore legs, and they bound as if worked by a spring. At the head of the flying herd was a male, at least five feet high, a magnificent specimen of the *macropus giganteus*, an 'old man,' as the bushmen say. The hunters gave them chase for four or five miles, and the dogs, who were afraid, and not without reason, of their vigorous paws, armed as they are with sharp claws, did not care to approach them.

But at last the herd stopped exhausted, and the 'old man' leant against a tree trunk ready to defend himself. One of the pointers sprang at him, and a minute afterwards fell back dead. The entire pack would not have got the better of these powerful creatures; bullets alone could bring them down. At that moment Robert almost fell a victim to his imprudence: to get a good aim he went so near the kangaroo that the animal sprang at him. Mary Grant, who was in the brake, stretched out her hands in terror towards her young brother, but John Mangles took out his hunting-knife, threw himself on the kangaroo, and struck it in the heart: Robert was uninjured and in another minute he was in his sister's arms.

This incident terminated the hunt. The kangaroos had dispersed after the death of their chief, whose remains were carried to the house. It was then six in the evening, and a magnificent dinner awaited the sportsmen. Amongst the dishes a kangaroo-tail soup, prepared in native style, was much appreciated. After dessert the guests went to the drawing-room, and the evening was

consecrated to music. Lucy Glenarvan was an excellent pianist and put her talents at the squatters' disposition: Michael and Sandy Patterson sang passages from the latest works of Gounod and other composers and even some of Wagner's 'music of the future.'

At eleven tea was brought in, made with that English perfection that no other nation can equal. But when Paganel asked to taste Australian tea, they brought him a liquid as black as ink—a quart of water in which half a pound of tea had been boiled for four hours: notwithstanding his grimaces, he declared it excellent. At midnight the guests were shown to their cool comfortable rooms, where they continued the day's pleasures in their dreams.

At daybreak next morning they took leave of the young squatters, with many thanks and promises to meet again at Malcolm Castle. Then the waggon set out, and as it skirted the base of Mount Hottam the house disappeared like a vision. Their way lay over station soil for another five miles, and it was not until nine o'clock that they passed the east palisade, and reached the almost unknown districts of Victoria.

CHAPTER XVI

THE AUSTRALIAN ALPS

AN IMMENSE barrier closed the route to the south-east. This was the chain of the Australian Alps, over fifteen miles long and rising 4,000 feet into the air.

John Mangles and his two sailors went ahead to choose the passes, and to cut their way through the thickets. Though Ayrton was so good a driver, he could not always prevent the waggon getting a jolt, which the ladies took in very good part, for it needed all the strength of the oxen to haul it through the damp clayey soil. They had scarcely gone half a degree when they encamped at the foot of the Alps, on the banks of the Cobongra Creek, in a plain covered with shrubs four feet high, with light-red leaves.

'We shall have some difficulty in crossing those mountains,' Glenarvan looked at their outline, already fading into the darkness. 'Alps is a name that gives food for thought.'

'Don't imagine that we have a second Switzerland before us, Paganel consoled him. 'In Australia there are the Grampians, Pyrenees, Alps, and Blue Mountains, just as there are in Europe and America, but only in miniature. It simply proves that the imagination of geographers is not unbounded, or that the supply of proper names is very poor.'

'Then the Australian Alps—' began Helena.

'Are pocket mountains,' answered Paganel. 'We shall cross them before we realise it.'

'Speak for yourself,' the major retorted. 'It's only an absent-minded man like you who could cross a chain of mountains without realising it.'

'Absent-minded!' cried Paganel. 'But I'm no longer that. I appeal to the ladies. Since I have set foot on this continent, haven't I kept every promise? Have I made a single mistake?'

'No, Mr. Paganel,' said Mary Grant; 'you've become the most perfect of men.'

'Too perfect,' laughed Lady Glenarvan. 'Your mistakes suited you.'

'I think they did,' answered Paganel. 'If I don't make any more I shall be just like anybody else. I hope before long to do something outrageous that will make all of you laugh. When I don't make mistakes I seem to have missed my vocation.'

The next day, 9th January, notwithstanding the assurances of the confident geographer, it was not without great difficulty that the little troop began the ascent of the Alps. They had to go at random along deep and narrow gorges, which might have no egress. Ayrton would no doubt have been much embarrassed if, after an hour's march, an inn, a miserable 'tap,' had not appeared on one of the mountain paths.

'The landlord can't make much of a fortune here,' cried Paganel. 'What's the use of it?'

'To give us the information we want about our route,' answered Glenarvan. 'Let's go in.'

Followed by Ayrton, he crossed the threshold of the Bush Inn, and met the landlord, a rough fellow, whose face indicated that

he was his own best customer for brandy, whiskey, and gin. Generally he had no visitors except squatters and cattle-dealers. His answers, given in a bad-tempered voice to Ayrton's questions, indicated the proper route. Glenarvan indemnified the landlord for his trouble, and was going to leave the tavern, when a bill pasted on the wall caught his attention. It was a Colonial police-notice about the escape of the convicts from Perth, and setting a price on Joyce's head. It offered £100 to whoever would give him up.

'Certainly' Glenarvan told the quartermaster, 'that wretch deserves hanging.'

'He isn't worth the hundred pounds set on his head,' Ayrton replied.

'I don't like the appearance of the tavern-keeper,' Glenarvan commented, 'notwithstanding his notice.'

'Nor do I,' Ayrton agreed.

Glenarvan and the quartermaster rejoined the waggon, which at once started for the point where the Lucknow Road ends. There a narrow path began to wind round the hill, and they commenced the ascent. They often had to dismount to help the heavy waggon along, or hold it back on the perilous slopes, and Ayrton had to harness the horses to the waggon to help the oxen, though it was as much as the poor animals could do to climb.

Either from the prolonged fatigue or some other unknown cause one of the horses succumbed, falling down suddenly. It was Mulrady's horse, and when he tried to get it up he found it was dead. Ayrton examined the animal, and seemed unable to understand its sudden death.

'It must have broken some blood-vessel,' the major suggested.

'Evidently,' Paganel agreed.

'Take my horse, Mulrady,' said Glenarvan. 'I'll get into the waggon.'

Mulrady obeyed, and the little troop continued its wearisome climb, leaving the horse's body to the ravens.

The Australian Alps are not very wide, their base covering only a width of eight miles. So if the pass chosen by Ayrton led to the eastern slope, it ought to take only forty-eight hours to cross the mountain. This crossed, the road would be level and easy to the sea.

During the 18th the travellers reached the highest point of the Pass, about 2,000 feet up, emerging on a plateau from which stretched a distant view. Towards the north sparkled the waters of Lake Omeo, covered with water-birds, and beyond it lay the vast plains of the Murray. To the south stretched the verdant plains of Gippsland, sheltered behind the screen of mountains, their farthest limits lost in obscurity as though night had already received them in her arms. This contrast was deeply felt by the spectators, and they did not look without emotion at the almost unknown country which they were going to cross to get to Victoria.

They encamped on the plateau, and next day began the descent. It was steep, and made more difficult by a storm of hail which assailed the travellers, forcing them to take refuge under the rocks. The hailstones were great lumps of ice as large as a hand; they tore the waggon tarpaulin in several places, and Paganel's scientific ardour was quenched in bruises. The hailstorm delayed the travellers about an hour, and when they again set out the roads were still slippery.

Towards evening the waggon, damaged in several places, but still solid on its wooden wheels, was descending the east slopes of the Alps amongst large and isolated pine-trees. The chain had been crossed without accident, and the usual arrangements were made for the evening.

Next morning Ayrton pressed Lord Glenarvan to send the order for the *Duncan* to join him on the coast; he wanted him to profit by the Lucknow road to Melbourne. If he waited any longer it would be difficult, for there would be no direct communication with the capital. These suggestions seemed good, and Paganel advised their being accepted.

Glenarvan was undecided, however, especially as the major was opposed to continuing the journey without Ayrton, for they did not know the route, and the quartermaster alone could show them the exact spot where the *Britannia* had been wrecked. John Mangles was of the same opinion; and he pointed out that the orders would reach the *Duncan* more easily if sent from Twofold Bay than by a messenger who would have to cross 200 miles of wild country. This course was adopted, and the major noticed Ayrton's disappointment, but made no comment.

The plains which stretched from the foot of the Australian Alps were level, with a slight slope towards the east. Thickets of mimosas and eucalyptus and gum-trees broke the monotonous uniformity, and the ground bristled with bright flowering shrubs. From twelve till two they were crossing a forest of strange-looking ferns, so tall that horses and riders could pass under their leaves. Paganel sighed with satisfaction at their delightful shade. He was expatiating on the satisfaction it gave him when all at once his companions saw him shake on his horse. Then horse and rider fell in an inert mass. Was it a sudden giddiness, or worse, suffocation caused by the heat? They ran to him, and Glenarvan cried—'Paganel! Paganel! What's the matter?'

'The matter is, I haven't any horse,' answered Paganel, getting out of the stirrups.

'What has come to him?'

'He's dead, as suddenly as Mulrady's.'

They examined the animal. It was quite dead.

'This is very strange,' John Mangles reflected.

'Yes, very strange,' the major spoke under his breath.

Glenarvan was much preoccupied with this second accident. If his horses were struck with an epidemic he should find it very difficult to continue his route.

Before the end of the day the word 'epidemic' seemed justified. A third horse, Wilson's, fell dead, and one of the oxen also succumbed. The means of transport was thus reduced to three oxen and four horses.

The situation became grave. The dismounted men could, if necessary, proceed on foot, for many squatters had walked across these desert regions. But if they had to abandon the waggon, what would become of the ladies? How could they cover the 120 miles that still separated them from Twofold Bay?

John Mangles and Glenarvan attentively examined the surviving horses, and could find no symptom of illness, or even of weakness; they hoped that the inexplicable epidemic would claim no more victims. Ayrton declared he could not understand it.

They set out again, and the pedestrians took it in turns to have a lift in the waggon. In the evening, after a march of only ten miles, camp was organised, and the night was passed under a

thicket of arborescent ferns, amongst which flew enormous bats, justly named flying foxes.

The next day, 13th January, no accident of the same nature happened again. The health of the travellers continued good, and horses and oxen worked well. Lady Glenarvan's receptions were very successful, thanks to the number of visits she received, and Olbinett took care to circulate the refreshments demanded by the heat. Half a barrel of Scotch ale was entirely consumed, and they declared Barclay and Co. to be the greatest men in Britain.

A day so well begun ought to end well. They had cleared fifteen good miles along an undulated country, and hoped to encamp the same evening on the banks of the Snowy, an important river which flows into the Pacific at the south of Victoria. In the evening, mist on the horizon marked its course, and a forest of high trees could be seen at a turning behind a slight rise in the ground. Ayrton drove his team through the wood; he had passed it, and was half a mile from the river, when suddenly the wheels of the waggon sank half-way into the mud.

'Look out!' he shouted to the horsemen who were following him.

'What is it?' asked Glenarvan.

'We're stuck in the mud,' Ayrton replied.

He urged on his oxen with his voice and goad, but they only sank deeper in their struggles to get free.

'We shall have to camp here,' John Mangles decided.

'That is the best thing we can do,' Ayrton agreed. 'Tomorrow we can see to get out of this.'

Glenarvan gave orders to halt. Night had succeeded a very short twilight, but heat had not gone with the sun: the air was stifling, and occasional lightning flashes told of some distant storm.

Ayrton succeeded, after a great deal of trouble, in getting his three oxen out of the mud, where they were embedded up to their flanks, and saw to their forage and that of the horses; Glenarvan noticed that he was particularly careful about this, and was reassured: the good condition of the team was of the greatest importance.

After supper, Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant retired to the waggon, whilst the men slept, some under the tent, and others on

the thick grass under the trees; in that healthy country this is not attended with unpleasant consequences.

By degrees they all fell into a heavy sleep. The darkness grew greater under a curtain of thick clouds that covered the sky, and there was not a breath of wind in the atmosphere. The silence of night was only interrupted by that 'minor third' of the 'more-pork' of which the poet Browning wrongly asserts 'none but the cuckoo knows.'

About eleven o'clock, after a heavy and fatiguing sleep, the major awoke. His half-shut eyes perceived an indistinct light moving amongst the trees. He got up, walked towards it, and was greatly surprised to find himself in the presence of a remarkable natural phenomenon. Before his eyes stretched an immense field of fungi, which emitted a phosphorescent light. The major was going to awaken Paganel, that he too might see it, when something stopped him. The phosphorescent light lit up the wood for half a mile, and MacNabbs thought he could see some shadows pass rapidly across its lighted edge. He lay down, and distinctly perceived several men looking on the ground at some fresh footprints. He was determined to know what they were doing; so, without awakening his companions, he crawled along the ground like a savage of the prairies, and disappeared under the tall grass.

CHAPTER XVII

A TOUCH OF MELODRAMA

IT WAS a frightful night: at two the rain began to fall in torrents, and the tent gave insufficient shelter. Glenarvan and his companions took refuge in the waggon, but they could not sleep. They talked, and the major, whose short absence had not been noticed, was the only one who kept silence. The rain did not stop, and they feared the Snowy would overflow; this, with a waggon already stuck fast in the mud, would much increase their difficulties. The men went out several times to take the level of the running water, and came back wet through.

At last daylight appeared. The rain ceased, but the sunlight

could not pierce the thick clouds, and large puddles of yellowish water, almost as large as ponds, covered the soil.

Glenarvan first examined the waggon, which was stuck in the loam in the midst of a vast depression. It would take the united strength of oxen, horses, and men to clear the heavy vehicle.

'We must hurry' John Mangles urged them 'this loam will dry up, and make the operation more difficult.'

They went into the wood to fetch the animals, but great was their astonishment at not finding them where they had been left the night before. With their hobbles they could not have got far, but the men searched the wood without finding them, and Ayrton, greatly surprised, returned to the bank of the Snowy, bordered with magnificent mimosas. He shouted to his team, but they did not appear as usual at his voice; he seemed very uneasy, and his companions looked at one another in disappointment.

An hour was passed in a vain search, and Glenarvan was going back to the waggon, a good mile away, when he heard a neighing and bellowing.

'There they are!' Mangles set off amongst the tufts of gastrolobium, tall enough to hide a herd of cattle. Glenarvan, Mulrady, and Ayrton followed him, and saw three horses and two oxen lying dead upon the ground, while a flock of thin ravens were croaking in the mimosas, watching their unexpected prey. The four men looked at each other, and Wilson could not restrain an oath.

'Hush, Wilson,' Glenarvan could hardly contain himself, 'we can't help it. Ayrton, take back the other ox and horse, we must make do with them.'

'If the waggon wasn't embedded, these two animals would suffice to draw it to the coast by short stages. We must get it out at all costs.'

'We'll try, John,' answered Glenarvan. 'Now we must go back, or they'll be uneasy at our prolonged absence.'

Ayrton led the ox and Mulrady the horse, and they returned by the winding river-paths. Half an hour later all knew about this disaster. The major had kept silence so far, but now he couldn't help saying 'It's a pity all the horses didn't want shoeing after crossing the Wimerra.'

'Why, sir?' asked Ayrton.

'Because the only horse left is the one you had shod there!'

'So it is,' said John Mangles. 'That's very strange.'

'Yes it is,' agreed the quartermaster, looking fixedly at the major.

MacNabbs bit his lips to prevent himself speaking, and though Glenarvan and the others wanted to hear him explain his allusion, he said nothing. He simply walked towards the waggon, which Ayrton was examining.

'What did he mean?' Glenarvan asked the young captain.

'I don't know,' he answered. 'The major isn't a man to speak without a reason.'

'No, he isn't,' Helena agreed. 'It looks as if he suspected Ayrton.'

'What of?' Paganel shrugged his shoulders.

'He can't suspect him of killing our oxen and horses,' Glenarvan protested. 'He can't have any interest in doing so.'

'But still I should like to know what the major meant,' said Mangles.

'Do you think he suspects him of conspiring with the convicts?' Paganel asked imprudently.

'What convicts?' asked Mary.

'Mr. Paganel is making a mistake,' John Mangles replied at once. 'He knows there aren't any convicts in Victoria.'

'Of course; what was I saying!' cried Paganel. 'Who's ever heard of convicts in Australia? The climate, you know, Miss Mary—'

The poor savant, wishing to repair his error, became like the waggon—stuck in mind. Lady Glenarvan was looking at him, and this embarrassed him exceedingly; seeing this, Helena drew Mary to the other side of the tent where Olbinett was preparing the dinner.

'I deserve to be transported,' Paganel wailed piteously.

'That's what I think,' Glenarvan spoke so seriously that the poor savant was overwhelmed.

He and Mangles went towards the waggon, where Ayrton and the two sailors were trying to get it free. The ox and horse, harnessed side by side, were pulling with all the strength of their muscles. Wilson and Mulrady were pushing the wheels, while the quartermaster, with whip and goad, urged on his ill-matched

team. The heavy vehicle did not stir: the loam, dry already, held it down fast. Mangles had it watered to make it less tenacious, but in vain. The waggon did not move and after a few more vigorous efforts animals and men stopped. Unless they were willing to take it to pieces, they must give up hope of getting it free: they could not do that without proper tools. Ayrton was going to make a fresh effort, when Glenarvan stopped him.

'That's enough, Ayrton,' said he. 'We must take care of the only animals we have left. If we must continue our route on foot, one can carry the ladies and the other the food.'

'Very well, my lord,' Ayrton took the two animals out of the shafts.

'Now we must decide what to do next,' said Glenarvan. 'We'll go back to the tent and consult the others.'

After a tolerably good breakfast the subject was mooted, and all were called upon to give their opinion. The first thing to do was to ascertain the position of the encampment and Paganel found they were on the 37th parallel, in longitude 147° 53', on the banks of the Snowy River.

'What's the exact longitude of Twofold Bay?' asked Glenarvan.

'A hundred and fifty degrees,' answered Paganel.

'That makes seventy-five miles. How far is Melbourne from here?'

'Two hundred miles, at least.'

'Now we know where we are,' said Glenarvan, 'what's to be done?'

The answer was unanimous, to go to the coast at once. Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant said they could easily walk five miles a day, nor were they alarmed at the idea of going all the distance on foot.

'You're a valiant companion for a traveller,' Glenarvan congratulated his wife. 'We're sure to find all the resources we need when we get to Eden.'

'There's no doubt about that,' Paganel agreed. 'Eden has already been in existence some years, and must have frequent communication with Melbourne. I should think we can revictual at Delegete, on the frontier of Victoria, and find means of transport there, too.'

'Don't you think it would be well to send word from here to the *Duncan* to meet you at the Bay?' asked Ayrton.

'What do you think, John?' asked Glenarvan.

'I don't think there's any need to hurry, my lord,' replied the young captain; 'there'll be always time to send to the *Duncan*. It will only take us four or five days to get to Eden.'

'Four or five days!' exclaimed Ayrton; 'say fifteen or twenty, and you'll be nearer the mark.'

'Fifteen or twenty days to go seventy-five miles!' cried Glenarvan.

'At least, my lord. You'll have to cross the most difficult part of Victoria, nothing but bush, where you'll often have to cut your own path.'

Ayrton had spoken firmly and Paganel confirmed all he said.

'I admit the difficulty,' Mangles conceded. 'In a fortnight, then, your lordship can send your orders to Tom Austin.'

'I must add,' Ayrton continued, 'that the principal obstacle is the Snowy, and you'll very likely have to wait till the water goes down.'

'To wait!' exclaimed Mangles. 'Isn't there any ford, then?'

'I don't think so,' answered Ayrton. 'This morning I looked for one in vain. It's rare to meet with so rapid a river at this season.'

'Is the Snowy wide, then?' asked Lady Glenarvan.

'Both wide and deep, your ladyship; it's a mile in width, and the current is strong; even a good swimmer wouldn't cross it without danger.'

'Well, we must build a raft,' cried Robert, 'or a canoe. There are plenty of trees here.'

'Robert is quite right,' said Mangles. 'That's what we'll have to do. It's useless to lose any more time talking.'

'What do you think about that, Ayrton?' asked Glenarvan.

'I think, my lord, that unless some help comes, a month hence will still find us on this bank of the Snowy.'

'Have you any better plan?' asked Mangles, impatiently.

'Yes, if the *Duncan* comes to Twofold Bay.'

'You're always talking about the *Duncan*; how could she help us?'

Ayrton hesitated a few minutes before answering; then he said,

evasively—‘I don’t want you to follow my advice. I’m quite ready to set out when his lordship gives the order.’ Then he folded his arms.

‘That’s no answer, Ayrton,’ Glenarvan insisted. ‘Tell us.

‘I propose that we don’t go any farther without some conveyance. We must wait for help here, and that help can only come from the *Duncan*. We could wait here while one of us takes the order to Tom Austin.’

This idea was received with surprise by most of the others and John Mangles did not conceal his dislike of it.

‘Meanwhile’ Ayrton continued, ‘the Snowy will go down, and you can find a practicable ford or build a canoe. That’s my plan, my lord.’

‘Very well, Ayrton,’ answered Glenarvan; ‘your plan deserves to be seriously considered. The great objection to it is the delay it would cause, but it would save much fatigue and, perhaps, real danger.’

‘What do you think, cousin?’ Helena asked. ‘You haven’t said anything.’

‘Ayrton’s advice seems the best, and I’m of his opinion,’ answered MacNabbs.

No one expected this answer, for until then MacNabbs had always spoken against Ayrton; even he seemed surprised, and gave the major a rapid glance. Paganel, Lady Glenarvan, and the sailors were greatly inclined to vote for Ayrton’s plan, and they hesitated no longer, so Glenarvan declared it adopted in principle.

‘Now, John,’ he added, ‘don’t you think prudence tells us to camp here, and wait for some means of conveyance?’

‘Yes,’ Mangles answered, ‘if your messenger succeeds in crossing the Snowy, which we can’t cross ourselves.’

They all looked at the quartermaster, who smiled confidently.

‘The messenger needn’t cross the river,’ said he.

‘Ah!’ exclaimed John Mangles.

‘He’ll simply go back to the Lucknow road, which will take him direct to Melbourne.’

‘Then he’ll have to go two hundred and fifty miles on foot!’ cried the young captain.

‘On horseback,’ replied Ayrton. ‘There’s one good horse left.

It will take four days. Add two for the *Duncan* to get to the Bay, and in one week the messenger will be back with what you need.'

The major approved with a gesture which astonished John Mangles greatly. They had all voted for the quartermaster's plan, and now the only thing to do was to put it in execution.

'Now we must choose our messenger,' said Glenarvan. 'Who'll go?'

All the men at once offered themselves, and John insisted on being allowed to go. But Ayrton said—'I think your lordship had better send me. I'm used to the country. Many a time I've crossed more difficult regions, and I can manage where anybody else would find himself in a fix. Give me a word for your mate, and in six days the *Duncan* shall be at Twofold Bay.'

'Well said,' Glenarvan approved. 'You're an intelligent fellow, Ayrton, and you'll succeed in getting through.'

It was clear that the quartermaster was the most suitable messenger: the others all saw that, and withdrew in his favour. John Mangles made one last objection, saying that Ayrton's presence would be needed to find traces of the *Britannia*. But the major pointed out that, as they were going to stay on the banks of the Snowy till he got back, there was no question of renewing the search without him.

'Very well; then go, Ayrton,' Glenarvan told him. 'Go, and get back as quickly as you can.'

A flash of satisfaction shone in the eyes of the quartermaster. He turned away his head, but not quickly enough to prevent John Mangles seeing the flash, which made him feel more suspicious than ever.

Helped by the two sailors, one seeing to his horse and the other to his food, the quartermaster made his preparations for departure. Meanwhile, Glenarvan wrote the letter to Tom Austin, ordering him to take the *Duncan* to Twofold Bay, and recommending the quartermaster to him as worthy of all confidence.

MacNabbs, who was looking over Glenarvan's shoulder, suddenly stopped him and asked how he spelled Ayrton's name.

'As it's pronounced, of course,' answered Glenarvan.

'You're wrong,' the major announced calmly. 'It's pronounced Ayrton, but it's written Ben Joyce!'

ALAND—ZEALAND

THE NAME of Ben Joyce produced the effect of a thunderclap. Ayrton had leapt forward suddenly, a revolver in his hand. A report was heard, and Glenarvan fell, struck by a bullet, while other shots were heard outside.

John Mangles and the sailors rushed to seize Ben Joyce, but the audacious convict was too quick for them, and escaped to his gang, who were waiting for him on the edge of the wood.

The tent did not give enough protection from the bullets, and they had to beat a retreat. Glenarvan, only slightly wounded, had risen to his feet.

'We must get into the waggon!' exclaimed John Mangles, as he dragged Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant into safety behind the thick leather curtains of their compartment. They were soon followed by the others, and the men stood, rifle in hand, awaiting the convicts' assault. These events had taken place with the speed of lightning. John Mangles was attentively watching the edge of the wood, but the shots had ceased when Ben Joyce reached it. Some white smoke was still curling up amongst the branches of the gum-trees, but all other indication of the convicts' presence had vanished.

The major and John Mangles went as far as the wood to reconnoitre. The place was deserted. There were numerous foot-prints on the ground, but no other traces of the convicts.

'They've gone away,' said Mangles.

'Yes,' answered the major; 'and their disappearance makes me uneasy. I prefer to meet them face to face. A tiger in the plain is better than a serpent in the grass.'

They did not return to the waggon till they had searched all the ground nearby. Ben Joyce's gang seemed to have taken flight like birds of prey and their disappearance was too unaccountable to leave the travellers in perfect security, so they decided to keep a sharp lookout. The waggon became a fortress, and two men, relieved every hour, were posted on guard.

The first care of Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant had been to dress Lord Glenarvan's wound. The bullet had merely grazed

his shoulder, and though it bled a good deal, he was able to move his fingers and bend his elbow enough to convince his friends that he was not seriously injured. When the arm was dressed he refused to let them pay any more attention to him, and asked the others what they knew about this business.

The travellers, except for Wilson and Mulrady, were all in the waggon. The major told Lady Glenarvan about the escaped convicts and their crime on the railway; he showed her the copy of the *Australian and New Zealand Gazette*, and explained how he had instinctively suspected Ayrton from the first. Two or three almost insignificant facts—a glance exchanged between the quartermaster and the farrier at the Wimerra river; Ayrton's evident dislike for entering any town or hamlet; his insistence about the *Duncan*; the strange death of the animals entrusted to his care; in short, a want of openness about him, had awakened the major's suspicions. He could not, however, have accused him directly but for the events of the preceding night. When he had arrived near the suspicious shadows by crawling through the grass, he saw, by the light of the phosphorescent plants, that three men were examining footprints recently made, and that amongst them was the farrier from Black Point. They were talking about the peculiar shape of one of the horse's footprints, which convinced them they were on the right track.

'All the other horses are dead now,' he had said.

'Yes,' said another, 'there's enough gastrolobium about to poison a regiment of cavalry.'

'Then,' added MacNabbs, 'they went away, and I followed them. They soon began to talk again. "That Ben Joyce is a brick," one of them said; "if his plan succeeds, he'll prove himself a famous quartermaster, that I know." Just at that moment the rascals left the wood. I knew all I wanted, and came back to the encampment with the certainty that notwithstanding Paganell all convicts do not get reformed in Australia.'

When the major had finished speaking, his companions were silent for some time.

'Then,' said Glenarvan, pale with anger, 'Ayrton has brought us here to be pillaged and massacred!'

'Yes,' the major replied.

'And his gang has been on our track ever since the *Wimerra*, waiting for a good chance!'

'Yes.'

'Then the wretch wasn't really a sailor on the *Britannia* at all?'

'Yes, I think he was,' the major answered. 'I believe his name really is Ayrton, and Ben Joyce is his alias. It's certain that he knew Captain Grant, and that he was quartermaster on board the *Britannia*.'

'Then how do you explain Captain Grant's quartermaster being in Australia?' asked Glenarvan.

'I can't explain it at all, nor can the police either, it seems,' replied the major. 'It's a mystery that the future may solve.'

'The police do not even know that Ayrton and Ben Joyce are one and the same person,' Mangles pointed out.

'He must have introduced himself into the Irishman's farm with some criminal intention,' Lady Glenarvan suggested.

'There's no doubt about it,' MacNabbs agreed. 'He was pre-meditating some treachery there when a better chance turned up.'

The conversation was interrupted by John Mangles, who, as usual, had been looking at Mary Grant: he said—'How pale you are, Miss Mary. Is anything the matter?'

'You're crying, my child,' said Lady Glenarvan, her attention attracted to the girl.

'My father!' were the only words Mary could utter.

She could not go on, but they all understood why the tears came as she uttered her father's name. The discovery of Ayrton's treason took away all hope. The convict had invented the shipwreck to decoy Glenarvan: the *Britannia* had never been wrecked on the breakers of Twofold Bay, nor had Captain Grant ever set foot on the Australian continent! For the second time an erroneous interpretation of the document had put them on a false scent. The children's grief was moving, and Paganel was in despair.

Meantime Glenarvan had gone out to Wilson and Mulrady, who were on guard. A complete silence reigned over the plain between the wood and the river: the clouds were very low, and in the profound torpor of the atmosphere the least sound would

have been heard. Ben Joyce and his band must have gone some distance, for the flocks of birds had again settled on the branches of the gum-trees, and kangaroos were feeding amongst the bushes, proof that there were no human beings in the immediate vicinity.

‘Have you seen or heard anything since your watch began?’ Glenarvan asked his two sailors.

‘No, your lordship,’ answered Wilson. ‘The convicts must be miles away.’

‘They can’t be in sufficient numbers to attack us,’ added Mulrady. ‘Ben Joyce has very likely gone to recruit his followers amongst the bushrangers who roam about the foot of the Alps.’

‘Very likely, Mulrady,’ Glenarvan agreed. ‘They are cowards, and they know we’re well armed. Perhaps they’re waiting till night to attack us, and we must keep a good look out till morning. How I wish we could cross the Snowy, and continue our route eastwards.’

‘Why doesn’t your lordship give us orders to build a raft?’ asked Wilson. ‘There’s plenty of wood here.’

‘No, Wilson,’ Glenarvan answered. ‘The river is too swift for any raft.’

Just then John Mangles, the major, and Paganel joined Glenarvan, as he examined the state of the river. The waters, swollen by the rain, had risen another foot, and were rushing along in an impetuous torrent like the American rapids. John Mangles declared that it was impossible to cross.

‘But,’ he added, ‘we mustn’t remain here without attempting something. What you were going to do before Ayrton’s treason is even more necessary now.’

‘What do you mean, John?’ asked Glenarvan.

‘I mean that it’s urgent to seek help; and as you can’t get to Twofold Bay, some one must go to Melbourne. There’s one horse left, let me take it and go.’

‘But that’s a dangerous thing to do,’ Glenarvan expostulated, ‘not only because Melbourne is two hundred miles from here, but because Ben Joyce and his comrades are sure to be watching the road.’

‘I know it, my lord; but I know, too, that our present position mustn’t continue. Ayrton only asked for a week’s absence to re-

turn with the crew of the *Duncan*, and I only ask for six days to do the same thing. Your lordship has only to command.'

'Before Lord Glenarvan decides,' said Paganel, 'I have one comment to make. It's clear that someone must go to Melbourne, but it mustn't be the captain of the *Duncan*—his life is too precious to risk. I'll go instead.'

'And why should it be you, pray?' asked the major.

'Aren't we here?' cried Mulrady and Wilson.

'And do you think I'm afraid of two hundred miles on horseback?' the major added.

'We must draw lots,' said Glenarvan. 'Will you write our names, Paganel?'

'Not yours, my lord,' said Mangles.

'Why not?' asked Glenarvan.

'You can't leave Lady Glenarvan, especially as your wound hasn't yet healed.'

'Glenarvan,' said Paganel, 'you can't leave the expedition.'

'No,' replied the major, 'your place is here, Edward.'

'There are risks to be run,' answered Glenarvan, 'and I'm not going to put my share on to anybody else. Write my name, too, Paganel, and Heaven grant it may be the first to come out.'

They had to obey him, and Glenarvan's name was added to the others. The lot fell to Mulrady, and the brave sailor gave a cheer of satisfaction.

'I'm ready to start, my Lord,' he declared.

Glenarvan shook hands with him, and returned to the waggon, leaving the major and John Mangles on guard.

Lady Glenarvan was at once told of the intention to send a messenger to Melbourne, and who was to go, and she spoke to Mulrady in a way that went to his heart. They knew he was courageous, intelligent, and strong; the lot could not have fallen better.

His departure was fixed for eight, after the short evening twilight. Wilson harnessed the horse, and changed the shoe put on at Black Point for another he had taken from one of the dead horses during the night. The convicts would not be able to recognise Mulrady's track nor to follow him, as they had no horses.

Whilst Wilson was busy with these details, Glenarvan prepared the letter for Tom Austin; but his wounded arm kept him from writing it himself, so he asked Paganel to do it for him. During all this time the Frenchman had been thinking of nothing but his false interpretation of the documents, and he did not hear Glenarvan's request until it had been repeated.

'I shall be very happy,' he said.

While he spoke he was mechanically preparing his memorandum book, from which he tore a blank page; then he waited, pencil in hand. Glenarvan began to dictate the following instructions:—

'Order to Tom Austin to sail at once, and take the *Duncan*—

Paganel was writing these words when his eye fell upon the copy of the *Australian and New Zealand Gazette*, which was lying on the ground. The paper was folded, and showed only the last few syllables of its title. Paganel's pencil stopped, and he seemed to have forgotten all about Glenarvan, his letter, and his dictation.

'Well, Paganel,' asked Glenarvan, 'what's the matter?'

'Nothing!' answered Paganel, then lowering his voice, he repeated, 'Aland, aland! aland!'

He had risen and seized the paper. They looked at him in astonishment, but all at once he dropped back into his chair, and said quite calmly—'Go on, Glenarvan.'

Glenarvan finished dictating the order:—

'Order to Tom Austin to set sail at once, and take the *Duncan* to the eastern coast of Australia.'

'Australia?' said Paganel. 'Oh, yes, Australia!'

Then he finished the letter, and passed it for signature to Glenarvan, who managed to write his name. The letter was folded and sealed, and Paganel, with a hand still trembling from emotion, wrote the address—

'Mr. Tom Austin,

Mate on board the yacht *Duncan*,

Melbourne.'

Then he left the waggon, repeating the incomprehensible words—'Aland! aland! Zealand!'

FOUR DAYS' DISTRESS

THE REST of the day passed without further incident. All the preparations for Mulrady's departure were completed, and the brave sailor was happy to be able to give his laird this proof of his attachment.

Paganel had recovered his usual composure. His look indicated some grave pre-occupation, but he seemed determined to keep it a secret. He had, no doubt, very good reasons for this determination, as the major heard him repeat these words like a man struggling with himself: 'No, no; they wouldn't believe me. Besides, what would be the good? It's too late.'

This decision arrived at, he busied himself with tracing out Mulrady's route for him from his map. All the tracks or paths through the bush ended in the Lucknow Road, which goes straight down south to the coast, and then turns off suddenly towards Melbourne, so that all that Mulrady had to do was to keep to it rigorously.

The only danger lay near the camp where Ben Joyce and his gang were in ambush. Once away, Mulrady was certain of out-distancing them, and fulfilling his important mission in safety.

At six the meal was taken in common. Torrents of rain were falling, and the tent did not give enough shelter, so they had all taken refuge in the waggon, which was moreover safe against attack.

The night proved very dark and favourable for Mulrady's departure. They had swathed his horse's hooves in cloth, to make them noiseless, and John Mangles put into his hand a six-barrelled revolver which he had just loaded. It would be a formidable weapon in the hands of a determined man, for six shots fired in a few seconds would clear a road obstructed by felons. Mulrady got into the saddle, they shook his hand, and soon he had disappeared along the edge of the wood. Then the wind redoubled its violence: it shook the high branches of the eucalyptus in its fury, and many a giant tree, whose sap was exhausted, fell during the tempest.

After Mulrady's departure, the travellers sheltered in the wag-

gon: Lady Glenarvan, Mary Grant, Glenarvan, and Paganel occupied the front compartment, which had been securely closed and in the second, Olbinett, Wilson, and Robert had found enough shelter. The major and Mangles were on watch outside, a necessary act of prudence, for an attack would be so easy, that it might be expected. They tried to peer into the darkness, and listened to the roar of the wind: sometimes it calmed for a few minutes, as if to take breath, and then the roar of the Snowy alone was distinguishable. It was during one of these lulls that the shrill sound of a whistle reached them. John Mangles went towards the major.

'Did you hear that?' he asked.

'Yes,' MacNabbs replied. 'Was it a man or an animal?'

'A man,' answered John Mangles. Then they listened. The inexplicable whistle was repeated, and something like a shot followed it, but the wind was rising again, and they could not clearly distinguish the sounds.

Just then the curtains of the waggon were raised, and Glenarvan joined his two companions. He, too, had heard the whistle and the report that had followed it.

'In what direction was it?' he asked.

'That!' said Mangles, pointing to the dark path Mulrady had taken.

'At what distance?'

'It came down wind,' answered Mangles, 'and it must have been at least three miles away.'

'We must go towards it,' Glenarvan grasped his rifle.

'You mustn't go!' the major protested. 'It's a trap to decoy us from the waggon.'

'But suppose it's a signal from Mulrady!' exclaimed Glenarvan.

'We shall know that tomorrow,' the major replied coldly, determined to keep Glenarvan from committing any useless imprudence.

'You can't leave the camp, my lord,' Mangles agreed. 'I'll go alone.'

'You shall not go either,' said the major with energy. 'Do you want them to kill us one by one? If Mulrady has been their victim it's a tragedy, and another mustn't be added to it. If the lot

had fallen to me instead of to Mulrady, I should have been in the same predicament, and I should neither ask nor expect any help.'

Good as the major's reasoning was, it did not convince Glenarvan, who went round the waggon, a prey to feverish excitement. While the major was trying to persuade him to go inside, a cry of distress was heard.

'Listen!' said Glenarvan.

The cry came in the same direction as the whistle, and seemed to be less than a quarter of a mile away. Glenarvan pushed the major aside, and he was already on the path, when a cry was heard several hundred paces from the waggon.

'Help! Help!'

The voice seemed weak and desperate. John Mangles and the major rushed towards it, and a few minutes later they saw a human form crawling along the underwood and uttering fearful groans.

It was Mulrady, wounded and apparently dying, and as his companions raised him they felt their hands wet with his blood. Glenarvan came up and helped them to carry the wounded man to the waggon, and on their arrival every one rose. Paganel, Robert, Wilson, and Olbinett left the waggon, and Lady Glenarvan gave up her compartment to the poor sailor. The major removed the man's vest and uncovered the wound, a dagger-thrust in the right side. MacNabbs dressed it skilfully; he could not tell whether the weapon had reached any vital organ, but the blood was flowing from the wound, and he succeeded in staunching it. Mulrady was laid on his other side, with his head and shoulders well raised, and Lady Helena made him drink a little water.

In about a quarter of an hour the wounded man, who had so far been motionless, began to move. He muttered incoherent words, and the major, bending down his ear, heard him say—

'My lord — the letter — Ben Joyce —'

The major repeated the words, and looked at his companions. What did Mulrady want to say? Ben Joyce had attacked the sailor, but why? Was it only to stop him and keep the *Duncan* from arriving?

Glenarvan searched Mulrady's pockets for his letter to Tom Austin, but it was no longer there.

The night was passed in anxiety and misery. They feared the wounded man, who was devoured by fever, might die at any moment. Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant, like two sisters of charity, never left him, and he had the most tender nursing.

Daylight came at last. The rain had ceased, though thick clouds were still moving across the sky. The ground was covered with wood from the trees; the loam, soaked by the rain, had again become soft, and made it difficult to get to the waggon, but it could not sink any deeper.

John Mangles, Paganel, and Glenarvan went as soon as it was light to examine the ground in the neighbourhood of the encampment. They went up the path to the place where Mulrady had been attacked and where two bodies lay on the ground. They were men whom he had killed: one was the farrier of Black Point, his face looking horrible in death.

Glenarvan did not extend his investigations any farther, but but came back to the waggon absorbed by the gravity of his position.

'We can't think of sending another messenger to Melbourne,' he declared.

'But we must, my lord,' John Mangles insisted. 'You must let me go this time.'

'No, John, you haven't even a horse to carry you the two hundred miles.'

Mulrady's horse, the only one left, had not reappeared and Glenarvan inferred that the convicts must have taken it.

'Whatever happens,' he said, 'we must all stay together. We must wait till the Snowy sinks—a week, or a fortnight, if necessary. Then we can reach Twofold Bay by easy stages, and once there we can send orders to the *Duncan* more safely.'

'It's the only thing to be done,' Paganel agreed. 'We're only thirty-five miles from Delegete, the nearest town of New South Wales, and there we shall find some conveyance to take us to Twofold Bay. Once there we can telegraph to Melbourne.'

As they returned to the encampment Robert ran to meet them, crying 'He's better! he's better!'

'Yes, Edward,' said Lady Glenarvan, 'there is a favourable change.'

'Where's MacNabbs?' asked Glenarvan.

‘With him. Mulrady asked to speak to you or the major. When the major saw how weak he was, he tried to prevent him speaking, but Mulrady insisted so much he had to give in.’

The interview had lasted some minutes when Glenarvan arrived, but there was nothing to do but to await the major’s report.

Soon the curtains of the waggon were drawn aside, and MacNabb’s reappeared: his face looked grave and sorrowful.

On leaving the encampment, he explained, Mulrady had followed one of the paths which Paganel had suggested. He was going as fast as the darkness would let him, and by his own estimation he had ridden about two miles when several men—five he believes—threw themselves at his horse’s head. The animal reared. Mulrady seized his revolver and fired, and he thought that two of his assailants had fallen. By the light of the explosion he recognised Ben Joyce, but that was all. He had no time to fire again. A violent blow on the right side brought him to the ground, and though he had not yet lost consciousness, the felons thought he was dead. He felt that they were searching him. Then he heard someone say—‘I’ve got the letter.’

‘Give it to me,’ Ben Joyce told him. ‘Now the *Duncan* is ours!’

Here Glenarvan could not restrain a cry. MacNabbs continued—

‘Now catch the horse,’ Ben Joyce ordered. ‘In two days I’ll be on board the *Duncan*, in six at Twofold Bay. Cross the river at Kemple Pier, reach the coast, and wait for me there. I’ll find means to get you on board, and then, with a ship like the *Duncan*, we’ll soon be masters of the Indian Ocean.’

Then Ben Joyce had mounted Mulrady’s horse and disappeared along the Lucknow Road, while the gang went southeast to the Snowy River. Although Mulrady had been so grievously wounded, he had had the strength to crawl to the spot where the others had found him.

This revelation horrified Glenarvan and his companions.

‘The *Duncan* a pirate ship!’ cried Glenarvan. ‘My crew massacred!’

‘Yes,’ the major agreed, ‘for Ben Joyce will reach the ship, and then—’

'We must reach the coast before the convicts do!' Paganel declared.

'But how are we to cross the Snowy?' asked Wilson.

'Like them,' answered Glenarvan, 'by Kemple Pier Bridge.'

'But what's to become of Mulrady?' asked Lady Glenarvan.

'We must take it in turns to carry him. I can't leave my crew to the mercy of Ben Joyce.'

The idea of crossing the Snowy by Kemple Pier Bridge was practicable, but hazardous. The convicts might ambush them on the bridge and defend it and they would be at least thirty against seven. But there are moments when it is useless to count the odds.

'My lord,' Mangles suggested, 'before risking our last chance on this bridge, it would be prudent to go and reconnoitre. I'll do that.'

'I'll go with you, John,' answered Paganel.

This suggestion was accepted, and they set out at once. They were to go down the banks of the Snowy till they came to the bridge, but to keep hidden from the convicts, who would probably be waiting about nearby. They were given weapons and food and they set out, hiding amidst the tall reeds of the river.

Their companions expected them back all day. Evening came, and to the great anxiety of Glenarvan they had not returned.

At last, about eleven, Wilson saw them coming back, worn out with their ten miles' march.

'What about the bridge?' Glenarvan rushed to meet them.

'It was there,' said Paganel, 'but the convicts have burnt it!'

CHAPTER XX

EDEN

IT WAS the moment not to despair, but to act. As Kemple Pier Bridge had been destroyed, they must cross the Snowy at any cost, and get to Twofold Bay before the convicts. They lost no time in useless talk, and next day, 16th January, John Mangles and Glenarvan went to look at the river. The water showed no signs of

going down, and it was rushing along in a stormy torrent. It would be tempting death to try to cross it.

'Shall I try to swim across?' John Mangles suggested.

'No, John,' Glenarvan held the young man back. 'We must wait.'

They returned to the camp, and the day was spent in terrible anxiety. Glenarvan went backwards and forwards to the Snowy, and tried to imagine some means of crossing it, but in vain. Had it been a torrent of lava, it would not have been more insuperable.

During these long hours of waiting, Lady Glenarvan, instructed by the major, nursed Mulrady with the most intelligent care. The sailor felt that he was returning to life, and MacNabbs could assure him that no vital organ had been injured: the loss of blood was enough to account for his extreme weakness. As soon as the wound closed, his complete cure would be only a matter of time. Meanwhile Lady Glenarvan made him keep to her compartment of the wagon. Mulrady felt deeply ashamed, and he was miserable at the idea that his condition might delay Glenarvan. They had to promise that he should be left at the camp under the guard of Wilson, if it became practicable to cross the Snowy.

Unfortunately this was not possible either that day or the next, Glenarvan grew desperate; his wife and the major tried in vain to calm him and exhort him to patience. How could he be patient when, perhaps at that very moment, Ben Joyce was embarking on board his yacht, or every hour was bringing the *Duncan* nearer to the fatal coast?

Anxious to overcome the obstacle at any cost John Mangles built an Australian raft with large pieces of bark from the gum-trees, fastened together with logs of wood, and making a very fragile craft.

The captain and his sailor tried this frail vessel during the 18th. All that skill, strength, and courage could do they did, but they were scarcely in the current when the boat capsized, and they were near to paying for their bold experiment with their lives. The boat, sucked down by the eddy, disappeared and they had not rowed twenty yards across a river a mile wide.

The next two days, 19th and 20th, were similarly lost. The major and Glenarvan went five miles up the Snowy without find-

ing a practicable crossing and they had to give up all hope of saving the *Duncan*. Five days had elapsed since Ben Joyce had left, time for the yacht to reach the coast, and be in the convicts' hands. But this state of things could not be prolonged. On the 21st Paganel found that the water had begun to sink and told Glenarvan so.

'What does it matter now?' answered Glenarvan; 'it's too late'

'That's no reason for stopping here,' said the major.

'We shall very likely get some rapid transport at Delegete,' Paganel surmised, 'and we may arrive in time to prevent some misfortune.'

'Then we'll try it,' cried Glenarvan.

John Mangles and Wilson at once set about building another larger raft. Experience having taught them that bark was too light to withstand the current, they made it of gum-tree trunks. It took some time, and was not finished till the next day. By that time the Snowy had sunk perceptibly: its current was still strong, but John hoped to reach the opposite bank in safety.

They embarked at half-past twelve, taking with them as much food as they could carry for a two days' journey. The remainder was left with the waggon and tent. Mulrady was well enough to go with them, for his convalescence had been rapid.

At one they were all on the raft. John Mangles had made a sort of oar to be placed on the starboard and entrusted it to Wilson, while he controlled a crude rudder he had made.

All went on well for about thirty yards, as Wilson managed to resist the current. But then the raft was caught in the eddy, and neither rudder nor oar could keep it straight. It began to float down stream with fearful speed, and was dragged into the middle of the river.

John and Wilson, with their oars, at last managed to make it take an oblique direction, and they neared the left bank. They were not more than a hundred yards away when Wilson's oar broke, and the raft drifted out again. John resisted the current with all his might, and Wilson, with bleeding hands, united his efforts to those of his captain.

At last they succeeded, and after a crossing that had lasted more than half an hour, the raft struck on the left bank. The

shock was so violent that the ropes broke, and the water bubbled over the travellers. They had only time to hold on to the overhanging bushes, and to lift out Mulrady and the two women, who were wet through; but the greater part of the food and all the weapons, with the exception of the major's rifle, drifted away with the remains of the raft.

The river was crossed, and the little troop was in a desert, thirty-five miles from Delegete, on the frontier of Victoria. Here they would meet with neither colonists nor squatters, for the whole region is uninhabited, except by ferocious and pillaging bushrangers. They decided to begin their journey at once, and Mulrady realised that he would be an incumbrance; he asked to be allowed to remain alone, and wait for help from Delegete.

Glenarvan refused: he could not reach Delegete for two days and the coast for five, which would bring him to 26th January. The *Duncan* would have left Melbourne on the 16th, so that a short delay would make little difference.

'No,' he told Mulrady, 'I won't leave you here. We must make a litter, and take turns to carry you.'

The litter was constructed of eucalyptus branches covered with twigs, and in spite of himself, Mulrady was placed upon it. Glenarvan, who wanted to be the first to carry his sailor, took one end of the litter and Wilson the other, and they continued their march.

This first day was passed silently and painfully, as they relieved each other at the litter every ten minutes. None of the sailor's companions complained of this fatigue, though it was increased by the great heat.

In the evening, after a march of only five miles, they encamped under some gum-trees. The remnants of the food saved from the raft furnished their evening meal, and then they had nothing to depend upon but the major's rifle. It rained during the night, and daylight seemed long in coming: they set out again at dawn, but the major did not find a chance of even one shot: the fatal desert seemed abandoned by animals as well as men.

Fortunately, Robert found a bustard's nest, in which were a dozen large eggs, which Olbinett cooked in the cinders. The road then became extremely difficult: the plains were bristling with spinifex, a prickly plant called 'porcupine' which tore their garments and made their legs bleed. Yet the courageous women did

not complain; they walked along valiantly, setting the example and encouraging their companions by look or word.

They stopped in the evening at the foot of Mount Bulla-Bulla, on the banks of the Jungalla Creek. Their supper would have been meagre had not MacNabbs killed a large rat, the *mus conditor*, which is regarded as excellent food. Olbinett roasted it, and it would have seemed worthy of still greater reputation had it been as large as a sheep: as it was, there was no meat left on the bones when they had done.

On the 23rd, tired but still energetic, the travellers set out again. After having gone round the hill, they marched over bush where grass seemed made of whalebone, and they had to cut their road either with axe or with fire.

That morning there was no question of breakfast, and hunger and thirst were added to the difficulties of walking over such ground on a burning day. They could not travel even half a mile an hour, and if they had not at last found means of slaking their thirst, they could not have gone much farther. They drank the contents of 'cephalots,' a kind of cup filled with liquid hanging from the branches of coralliform shrubs, a food which keeps life in the natives when game, insects, and serpents fail. Paganel found, in the dried-up bed of a creek, a plant whose excellent qualities he had often heard described by one of his colleagues of the Geographical Society.

It was the *nardou*, which had prolonged the life of Burke and King in the interior deserts. Beneath its trefoil leaves grow dried sporules as large as lentils: crushed, they make a sort of bread that appeases the tortures of hunger. There much of the plant was growing locally and Olbinett took in a good supply of it, assuring them food for several days.

Next day, the 24th, Mulrady could go part of the way on foot, his wound being completely healed. The town was only ten miles off when they encamped that evening at Delegele, in longitude 149°, on the frontier of New South Wales.

Fine penetrating rain had been falling for some hours, and they would have to sleep shelterless had not John Mangles discovered a woodman's hut, abandoned and dilapidated. Wilson tried to light a fire in it to cook their *nardou* bread, and went to pick up the dead wood that encumbered the ground: but when he tried

to set fire to it the large quantity of aluminous matter it contained kept it from burning: it was the incombustible wood Paganel had cited in his list of Australian products.

So they had to do without fire, and consequently without bread, and to sleep in their wet clothes, whilst the mocking birds, hidden in the tall branches, seemed to scoff at these unfortunate travellers.

But Glenarvan was reaching the end of his troubles. It was time: the two young women made heroic efforts, but their strength was failing hourly; they dragged themselves along, they could no longer walk.

Next day they set out again at daybreak. At eleven, Delegete appeared, fifty miles from Twofold Bay. Once there, transport was quickly organised. Glenarvan regained hope as he felt himself so near the coast. If there had been the slightest delay, he might arrive before the *Duncan*. In twenty-four hours he would reach the Bay.

At noon, after a comfortable meal, the travellers were seated in a mail-coach, drawn by five vigorous horses. The postilions, stimulated by the promise of a princely reward, kept the horses at a gallop, and did not lose two minutes at the ten mile relays. Glenarvan had seemed to have imparted to them the ardour that devoured him.

All day and night they went on at six miles an hour.

The next day, at daybreak, a dull murmur announced the vicinity of the Indian Ocean, but they had to go round the Bay to reach the point on the 37th parallel where Tom Austin was to meet them.

When the sea came in sight, all eyes were turned towards it. By some miracle of providence was the *Duncan* there?

Nothing was in sight. Sky and water blended on the horizon, and not a sail was to be seen on the vast expanse of ocean. One hope still remained. Tom Austin might have thought it prudent to drop anchor in Twofold Bay, for the sea was rough, and a ship could not ride in safety on the 37th parallel.

'To Eden!' Glenarvan gave orders.

The mail-coach at once turned to the right, and made for the small town of Eden, some five miles off.

The postilions stopped near the lights at the entrance to the

port: a few ships were lying at anchor there, but the *Duncan* was not among them.

Glenarvan, John Mangles, and Paganel went down to the Custom House, where they questioned the clerks about the arrivals during the last few days. No ship had put into port there for a week.

'Perhaps we have arrived first, and he didn't start so soon,' said Glenarvan.

John Mangles shook his head: he knew that Tom Austin would never have delayed carrying out an order so long as that. Glenarvan telegraphed to the shipbroker's office at Melbourne, and then the travellers were driven to the Victoria Hotel. At two a telegram was put into Lord Glenarvan's hand:

'To Lord Glenarvan,

"Eden"

"Twofold Bay."

" *Duncan* started on 18th instant. Destination unknown."

The telegram fell from Lord Glenarvan's hands.

There was no longer any doubt possible. The honest Scottish yacht, in the hands of Ben Joyce, had become a pirate ship.

Thus ended this journey across Australia, begun under such favourable circumstances. All traces of Captain Grant seemed irrevocably lost. The search had cost the lives of a whole crew, and the courage which no natural event could damp had been overwhelmed by the perversity of man.

AMONG THE CANNIBALS

THE 'MACQUARIE'

IF EVER those who were seeking Captain Grant might despair of finding him, was it not now, when they needed everything? How could they continue their search? The *Duncan* no longer existed, and even an immediate return to Scotland was impossible. So the enterprise of these generous Scotsmen had failed. Failure! A sad word, which has no echo in a brave soul; but, bending under the strokes of fate, Glenarvan had to acknowledge his inability to carry out the task to which he had devoted himself.

In this crisis, Mary Grant had the courage not to mention her father's name. She restrained her own anguish, thinking of the unfortunate crew who had just perished. The daughter gave place to the friend; and it was she who now consoled Lady Glenarvan, who had hitherto comforted her.

She was the first to speak of a return to Scotland. When John Mangles saw her so courageous and so resigned, he admired her more than ever. He wanted to say a word or two of hope of their still finding the captain, but Mary stopped him with a glance. Later she said: 'No! Let's think of the ones who are sacrificing themselves. Lord Glenarvan must return to Europe!'

'You're right, Miss Mary,' John Mangles replied, 'it must be so, and the English authorities must be told of the *Duncan's* fate. But do not despair. Rather than give up the search we have begun, I would undertake it alone! I'll find Captain Grant, or I'll perish in the attempt!'

John Mangles meant this quite seriously. Mary accepted his offer, and held out her hand to ratify this treaty. On his part it meant the devotion of all his life, on hers, an endless gratitude.

That day their departure was definitely decided upon: they would go to Melbourne without delay. So next day John went to find out what ships were about to sail: he counted upon finding

frequent communication between Eden and the capital of Victoria.

His expectation was not realized. Ships were scarce. Three or four vessels anchored in Twofold Bay formed the whole of its merchant service, and not one of them was bound for Melbourne, Sydney, or any other port from which there were ships bound for England.

What was to be done? Wait for a ship? They might wait a long time, for Twofold Bay is but little frequented. After many discussions, Glenarvan was about to suggest that they should try to reach Sydney along the coast, when Paganel made a suggestion which no one had expected.

The geographer had paid a visit to Twofold Bay to see where the three ships anchored there were bound for. One was preparing to start for Auckland, the capital of the North Island of New Zealand. Paganel suggested taking passage on this ship, and going to Auckland, whence it would be easy to return to Europe in any of the Peninsular Company's ships.

This suggestion was seriously considered. Paganel did not, as usual, launch out into a series of arguments, but restricted himself to facts. He told them that the journey would not last more than five or six days, the distance which separates Australia from New Zealand being not more than a thousand miles. By a strange coincidence, Auckland was situated on the thirty-seventh parallel, which they had so obstinately followed from the coast of Australia. The geographer might certainly, without being taxed with partiality, regard this as an argument in his favour.

John Mangles supported Paganel's plan: they could not wait for the problematical arrival of a ship in Twofold Bay, but before taking any steps, he thought it advisable to visit the ship. So he, with Glenarvan, the major, Paganel, and Robert, took a boat, and in a few oar-strokes they reached the ship, which was anchored at two cables' length from the quay. She was a brig of two hundred and fifty tons burthen, the *Macquarie*, and coasted between the different ports of Australia and New Zealand.

The captain, or rather the 'master,' received his visitors rather discourteously, and it was easy to see that they had to do with a man without education; his manners were not much better than those of his crew. A large red face, coarse hands, a flat nose, one

eye, lips blackened by the pipe, and brusque manners, made Will Halley an unpleasant person. But there was no choice, and for a journey of only a few days it was not worth while to look too closely.

'What do you people want?' he asked, when the strangers set foot on his ship.

'The captain,' John Mangles told him.

'That's me,' Halley declared.

'The *Macquarie* is bound for Auckland, isn't she?'

'Yes; well?'

'What does she carry?'

'Anything that can be bought or sold. Well?'

'When does she start?'

'Tomorrow, at high water—twelve o'clock. Well?'

'Can you take passengers?'

'That depends on what passengers, and whether they'll be content with the grub on board.'

'They'll bring their own food.'

'Well?'

'Well?'

'How many are there?'

'Nine, and two of them are ladies.'

'Well?'

'Do you accept?' said John Mangles, not at all embarrassed by the captain's manner.

'What's the pay?' asked Halley.

'How much do you want?' John asked him.

'Fifty pounds.'

Glenarvan made a sign of assent.

'Agreed!' said Mangles.

Halley held out his hand. 'I want a deposit,' he said.

'Here are twenty-five pounds,' John Mangles counted the sum into the master's hand, and he put it into his pocket without any thanks.

'You must be on board before noon tomorrow, or if you aren't I don't wait.'

'We shall be there.'

All this arranged, Glenarvan and the others left the ship with-

out Will Halley's having even touched the greasy cap stuck on his red shock.

'What a brute!' said John.

'What a bear!' added the major.

'And I fancy,' John Mangles added, 'that this same bear has, some time or other, traded in human beings.'

'What does that matter?' Glenarvan answered; 'all we care for is to get to Auckland, and as his ship is going to Auckland, that's all we want with him.'

Lady Helena and Mary Grant learnt with pleasure that their departure was fixed for the next day.

Glenarvan told them that the *Macquarie* would not be so comfortable as the *Duncan*, but he knew that they were not women to be disturbed by so small a matter. Olbinett was told to see to the food: this poor man, since the loss of the *Duncan*, had often wept over the fate of the unfortunate Mrs. Olbinett, left on board like the rest of the crew, a victim to the convicts' ferocity. But he fulfilled all a steward's duties with his usual zeal, and the food he provided was far better than what was to be had on the brig.

Meanwhile the major had cashed some cheques that Glenarvan had on the Union Bank at Melbourne: he did not mean to be without gold any more than without arms and ammunition. As to Paganel, he bought an excellent map of New Zealand, published at Edinburgh by Johnston. By that time Mulrady had recovered and no longer felt anything of the wound which had placed his life in danger; he thought he should be all right again directly he got to sea.

Wilson undertook to get everything ready for lodging the passengers on board. He set to work with brush and broom, and Halley let him do as he pleased. He took very little notice of Glenarvan and his companions; he did not even know their names, or want to know them. They were worth £50, that was all; and he valued them less than the 200 tons of tanned hides which filled his hold. He passed for being a pretty good navigator of seas which the numerous coral reefs made so dangerous.

Glenarvan first wanted to return to that part of the shore crossed by the 37th parallel, to visit once more the presumed place of the shipwreck: Ayrton certainly had been the quartermaster of the *Britannia*, and she might really have been lost upon

that part of the Australian coast, on the east instead of the west coast: it was there, too, that the *Duncan* had fallen into the convicts' hands. Perhaps there had been a fight. Why should they not find some traces of the struggle on the coast? If the crew had perished in the waves, would not the waves have thrown up some of the corpses upon the shore?

Glenarvan was accompanied by his faithful John. The landlord of the hotel sent them two horses, and they set out to explore the coast around Twofold Bay.

It was a sad expedition. They rode on without speaking; but they understood one another quite well. The same thoughts and the same anxieties troubled them. They had no need to talk.

Although John carefully explored every part of the coast, there was no sign either of a shipwreck or of the *Duncan*—nothing on either coast or sea. But he, John Mangles discovered on the coast plain traces of a camp and the remains of fires recently lit. Had a wandering tribe of natives stayed there? No, for Glenarvan saw an undoubted indication of a convict's having been there.

This was an old yellow and grey coat, a wretched rag left at the foot of a tree, and it bore the marks of the convict station at Perth. The convict was no longer there, but his filthy garment spoke for him: this livery of crime, after having clothed some wretched creature, was rotting upon this desert coast.

'You see, John,' said Glenarvan, 'the convicts have been here, and our poor comrades of the *Duncan*—'

'Yes,' John answered sadly; 'it's certain that they didn't land; they must have perished.'

'The wretches!' cried Glenarvan. 'If ever they fall into my hands I'll avenge my crew!'

Grief had hardened his expression. For a few minutes he gazed at the expanse of waves, searching, perhaps, for a sign of some ship almost lost in the distance. Then he closed his eyes for an instant and became himself again; without adding a word, or making a gesture, he set back on the road to Eden as fast as he could gallop.

One formality remained to be carried out—a declaration to the magistrate of all that had happened. This was made that evening and the magistrate could hardly hide his pleasure in drawing up his report. He was delighted at the departure of Ben Joyce and

his gang, and the whole town shared in his satisfaction. The convicts had left Australia—thanks to a new crime, it is true—but they were gone: this important news was at once telegraphed to the authorities of Melbourne and Sydney.

This declaration finished, Glenarvan returned to the hotel, where the travellers passed the rest of the evening sadly enough. Their thoughts dwelt upon this country, so fruitful in misfortunes. They remembered how many bright hopes they had had at Cape Bernouilli, hopes so cruelly destroyed at Twofold Bay! Paganel was in a state of feverish agitation. John Mangles, who had watched him carefully since the affair at Snowy River, felt that the geographer wanted to speak, and yet could not bring himself to do so. Many times he had pressed him with questions, to which he could obtain no reply.

However, this evening John took him to his room, and asked him why he was so nervous.

‘I’m no more nervous than usual, John,’ Paganel answered evasively.

‘Ah, Mr. Paganel, there’s some secret you want to tell,’ said John.

‘Yes,’ cried the geographer. ‘I can’t keep it back any longer.’

‘What can’t you keep back?’

‘Why, that I’m both glad and sorry to visit New Zealand.’

‘Do you think you’ve discovered anything fresh?’ John Mangles asked. ‘Have you hit on a new trail?’

‘No, friend John! Those who go to New Zealand, don’t come back. Nevertheless—well, you know human nature. We only need to breathe to make us hope! And my motto is, “*Spiro, spero!*” which is as good as the best motto in the world.’

CHAPTER II

APPROACHING NEW ZEALAND

THE NEXT day, 27th January, the passengers were installed on board the brig.

Will Halley had not offered his cabin to the ladies; a want of

politeness the less to be regretted as the den was only fit for a bear. When they set sail a little after noon with the ebb tide, Wilson wanted to help the crew, but Halley told him to keep quiet and not trouble himself about what did not concern him; he was accustomed to see to everything himself, and he wanted neither help nor advice.

This was said for the benefit of John Mangles, who smiled at the awkwardness of some of the manoeuvres. John took the hint, reserving to himself the right of interfering if the awkwardness should endanger their safety. However, the sails were set at last, but the brig went very slowly; she was heavily built, and difficult to manage. They had to make the best of it, but fortunately they could not be more than five or six days at most in getting to Auckland, notwithstanding their slow rate of sailing.

At seven in the evening they lost sight of the shores of Australia, and of the light at Port Eden. The sea was very rough, and the passengers had to keep below, for the rain fell in torrents.

There was but little conversation on board; Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant scarcely exchanged a word. Glenarvan could not keep still: he walked backwards and forwards, while the major stayed motionless. John Mangles, followed by Robert, went on deck from time to time to look at the sea, Paganel stayed in a corner and thought over all the events that had happened since he left his native country. His thoughts were again turned to the document. 'Contin . . . Contin . . .,' he repeated; 'that must mean continent, and New Zealand is an island.'

It was clear that he was wondering whether New Zealand might not, after all, be the place whence Captain Grant had sent the bottle containing the documents.

On 31st January, four days after her departure, the *Macquarie* had not cleared two-thirds of the narrow strip of ocean between Australia and New Zealand. Halley interfered very little with the management of the ship; he was rarely seen, and passed his time in his cabin getting tipsy on gin or brandy. His sailors followed his example at every opportunity, and never was a ship left to her own devices more than the *Macquarie* of Twofold Bay. This unpardonable negligence forced John Mangles to be continually on the watch, and more than once Mulrady and Wilson righted the helm when otherwise the ship would have been thrown on her

beam ends. Will Halley interfered, and cursed the two sailors for their pains; not being very patient, they wanted to shut the drunken bully up in the hold for the rest of the voyage. John Mangles appeased them, but not without much trouble.

Yet the situation of the ship still troubled him; but not wanting to make Glenarvan anxious, he spoke only to the major and Paganel. MacNabbs gave him, in other words, the same advice as Mulrady and Wilson.

‘If it should become necessary, John, you ought not to hesitate to take over command of the ship. This drunkard, after he has landed us at Auckland, can become master of his ship again and capsize her if he likes.’

‘That’s very true, Mr. MacNabbs,’ John replied, ‘and I shall do so if it’s absolutely necessary. While we’re in the open sea, a little watchfulness is enough; neither my sailors nor I will leave the deck. But as we near the coast, if Will Halley doesn’t recover his reason, I confess I shall be in a difficulty.’

‘Cannot you direct her course?’ asked Paganel.

‘That would be difficult,’ John replied. ‘Would you believe it, there isn’t a sailing chart on board?’

‘Is it possible?’

‘Unfortunately it is. The *Macquarie* only trades between Eden and Auckland, and Will Halley knows the route so well that he never takes his bearings.’

‘No doubt he thinks his ship knows the road, and that she’ll steer herself.’

‘Oh,’ John Mangles answered, ‘I don’t believe in ships that steer themselves, and if Will Halley is drunk when we near land, we’ll be in great danger.’

‘But,’ said MacNabbs, ‘in such an extremity couldn’t you take the ship to Auckland?’

‘Without a chart of this part of the coast, it would be impossible, for it’s very dangerous. There are a series of small fiords, as irregular and as perilous as those of Norway. The reefs are numerous, and it takes great experience to avoid them. No matter how stoutly a ship may be built, she would be lost if once she struck upon any of those rocks hidden a few feet under the water.’

‘If so,’ said the major, ‘the crew would have to take refuge on the coast.’

‘Yes, if there were time, Mr. MacNabbs.’

‘What an alternative!’ Paganel exclaimed; ‘for the coasts of New Zealand are not over hospitable.’

‘Are you thinking of the Maoris, Mr. Paganel?’ asked John Mangles.

‘Yes, my friend. They made their reputation in the Indian Ocean. It is not a question here of timid, dull Australians, but of a race both imaginative and intelligent, of cannibals, of anthropophagi, from whom we must expect no pity.’

‘So,’ said the major, ‘if Captain Grant has been shipwrecked upon the shores of New Zealand, you would advise us not to continue the search?’

‘Upon the coast, yes,’ replied the geographer, ‘for we may possibly find traces of the *Britannia* there; but in the interior, no, for it would be useless. Every European who ventures to these fatal countries falls into the hands of the Maoris, and every prisoner in the hands of the Maoris is a lost man. I advised my friends to cross the Pampas and Australia, but I can never advise them to cross New Zealand. I hope it may please God we should never fall into the power of its ferocious natives.’

Paganel’s fears were only too well justified. New Zealand has a terrible reputation, and a sanguinary mark may be put against all the incidents which followed its discovery. The list of its martyrs is long.

CHAPTER III

BREAKERS

ON 2ND FEBRUARY, six days after her departure, the *Macquarie* was not yet in sight of the shores of Auckland. The wind was good, and kept in the south-west, but the currents were contrary, and the sails in such bad order that the heavy seas tried the masts, which shook violently every time the ship rolled. Fortunately, Halley was in no hurry, and did not put on much sail, or they would have inevitably fallen. So John Mangles hoped that

the old hulk would reach port without accident, but it hurt him to see his companions so badly accommodated.

Neither Lady Glenarvan nor Mary Grant complained, although continual rain forced them to stop below. There the want of air and the movements of the ship inconvenienced them greatly, and they often came up on deck and braved the inclemency of the weather until some terrible squall again forced them to go below into the narrow space, more fit to stow merchandise than passengers. Then their friends tried to amuse them; but Paganel's accounts of New Zealand left them indifferent and cold, instead of rousing them to enthusiasm. They were going to this new country under the pressure of fate and not by their own will.

Of all the passengers of the *Macquarie*, the most to be pitied was Lord Glenarvan. He was seldom seen below: he could not keep still; his nervous, excitable nature could not endure an imprisonment in so small a space. Day and night he stayed on deck, taking no notice of the torrents of rain or of the heavy seas that broke over the ship, sometimes leaning over the side, sometimes striding up and down in feverish agitation. His eyes were constantly fixed upon emptiness and he suffered all the misery of an energetic man who feels himself powerless. John Mangles never left him, and bore at his side all the inclemency of the weather. Whenever the mist lifted a little, Glenarvan swept the horizon with an eager glance. This made Mangles ask: 'Is your lordship looking out for land?'

Glenarvan shook his head.

'Still' continued the young captain, 'you must be anxious to leave the brig. We ought to have sighted Auckland thirty-six hours ago.'

Glenarvan did not answer; he kept his telescope fixed on the horizon.

'Land isn't on that side,' John Mangles told him. 'Your lordship must look out on the starboard.'

'But I'm not looking for land, John.'

'For what then, my lord?'

'For my yacht, my *Duncan*!' Glenarvan answered bitterly. 'She's doing the horrible trade of a pirate on these seas, and I have a presentiment that we shall meet her.'

'God forbid, my lord!'

‘Why, John?’

‘Your lordship forgets our situation. What could we do on this brig if the *Duncan* gave chase? We could not even escape. We should be taken prisoners, and given up to those wretches’ mercy. We would certainly take care not to be taken alive; but think, my lord, of Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant!’

‘Poor women!’ murmured Glenarvan. ‘John, I’m almost beginning to despair.’

‘We have nothing to fear now, my lord,’ answered the young captain, ‘this hulk is making little headway, but it’s making some. Halley is a drunken sot. But I’m here and if the approaches to land seem dangerous I’ll keep out at sea; but as to finding ourselves alongside the *Duncan*, God forbid!’

That night was terrible. Darkness set in almost immediately at seven, and the sky was threatening. Will Halley’s seaman’s instinct got the better even of his drunken stupor, and he emerged from his cabin, rubbing his eyes and shaking his large red head. Then he took a long breath of sea air, as another might have swallowed a large glass of water, to restore himself, and examined the masts. The wind was freshening, and veered round due west, blowing right on to the coast of New Zealand.

Halley swore at his men, and ordered the topgallant sails to be taken in, and the sails to be set for the night. John Mangles approved, without saying anything: he had given up speaking to the man, but neither he nor Glenarvan left the deck. Two hours passed and then a great gale set in: Halley had the topsail reefed and then double-reefed. The *Macquarie* quivered with the waves as if her keel had struck some rock: and when one of the heavy seas that swept over her deck washed away her longboat, John Mangles began to be very uneasy. Any other ship would have skimmed such waves with ease, but this unwieldy craft shipped such heavy seas that the water could not escape quickly enough through the scuppers. It would have been wise to break down part of the bulwarks to let it flow away, but Will Halley refused.

About half-past eleven John Mangles and Wilson, who were standing to the leeward, heard a noise. It made Mangles seize Wilson’s arm, and say: ‘That’s surf!’

‘Yes,’ Wilson replied, ‘we aren’t two cables’ length from it. That’s the land.’

John leaned over the bulwarks, looked at the dark waves, and shouted—‘Sounding-line, Wilson!’

The master, standing in the bow, did not seem to know where he was. Wilson cast the lead; the cord ran out between his fingers and at the third knot it stopped.

‘Three fathoms!’ cried Wilson.

‘Captain,’ John ran up to Will Halley, ‘we’re on the breakers!’

Halley shrugged his shoulders, whereupon John hastened to take the helm, and to give the orders which the drunken captain ought to have given long before. In this emergency, Halley lost all presence of mind, and his sailors, hardly sober, could not understand his orders. He was surprised at the proximity of the land, only eight miles to the leeward, instead of thirty or forty, as he had supposed: the currents had thrown him off his habitual course, and taken him unawares. John Mangles’ prompt manoeuvres sent the *Macquarie* off the breakers, but he did not know the coast; for all they knew, he might be encircled by rocks: the wind was blowing right on to the shore, and they might touch at any moment.

Suddenly a shock was felt: the *Macquarie* had struck upon a rock: the bowsprit snapped, and the foremast seemed likely to give way. Then there was a sudden lull, and the ship drifted back. But a great wave caught her up, and carried her higher still upon the ridge, where she struck with a great shock. The foremast came down with all its rigging, and all the panes of glass in the cabin were smashed. The passengers rushed out, but the sea was dashing in great waves over the deck, and they could not stay there safely. Mangles knew that the ship was solidly embedded in the sand, and begged them to go below.

‘I must know the truth, John,’ Glenarvan insisted quietly.

‘The truth is we shan’t sink,’ Mangles replied. ‘We have plenty of time to consider what to do.’

‘It’s midnight.’

‘Yes, my lord, and we must wait till daybreak.’

‘Can’t we lower the boat?’

‘Not in such a sea and such darkness. Besides, we shouldn’t know where to land.’

‘Very well, we must wait till day.’

Halley was running like a madman up and down the deck.

while his sailors broke open a cask of brandy, and set to work to drink it. Mangles foresaw that their drunkenness would soon cause a terrible scene, and that they could no longer depend upon the captain to restrain them. The man was wringing his hands and pulling out his hair by handfuls, and all he was thinking about was his cargo, which was not insured. Mangles did not worry about consoling him, but told his companions to get their weapons so as to be ready to deal with the sailors, who were maddening themselves with brandy, and uttering the most frightful blasphemies.

‘The first of those wretches who tries to come below,’ the major said quietly, ‘is a dead man.’

The sailors, no doubt, saw that the passengers were determined to make themselves respected, for, after a few attempts at pillage, they disappeared. John Mangles took no further notice of them, and awaited dawn with impatience.

The ship was then quite motionless. The sea was gradually getting calmer as the wind fell, so that the hull might resist a few hours longer. When the sun rose, John meant to study the land. If it offered an easy landing-place, the small boat, the only one left, would serve to convey the crew and passengers, though three journeys at least would be necessary, for the boat would only hold four people. The long-boat had been washed away by the heavy seas.

While thinking over the dangers of the situation, John Mangles, leaning against the cabin door, listened to the roar of the surf, and he tried to peer through the darkness. He wondered how far off this much-desired, and at the same time much-feared, country could be. The breakers often extend many leagues from the coast. Could the frail boat carry them any distance?

While John was thinking this over and wishing for some light in the sky, the passengers, trusting themselves to him, slept quietly. The brig being motionless, there was nothing to disturb their slumbers, and so, no longer hearing the cries of the drunken crew, they gave themselves up to a short sleep. At one in the morning a profound silence reigned on board; the brig herself was asleep upon her bed of sand.

Towards four, when the first streaks of daylight appeared in the east, John came up on deck. A curtain of mist hung along

the horizon and some vague forms were showing themselves under the morning mists, but high aloft. A light swell still troubled the sea, and the waves, far out, lost themselves in a thick, motionless fog.

John waited. The light grew little by little, and streaks of red appeared on the horizon; the curtain slowly rose on the vast scene behind. Black reefs rose out of the water. Then a line appeared on the bank of foam, a shining point lit up like a lighthouse on the summit of a rock, and thrown across the disc of the rising sun. Land was there not more than nine miles away.

'Land!' cried John Mangles.

Awakened by his voice, his companions rushed on deck and looked in silence at the line of coast on the horizon. Hospitable or not, it must be their place of refuge.

'Where's Will Halley?' asked Glenarvan.

'I don't know, my lord,' answered Mangles.

'And his sailors?'

'Disappeared like himself.'

'And like him, dead drunk, no doubt,' added MacNabbs.

'They'd better be looked for,' Glenarvan decided 'we can't abandon them.'

Mulrady and Wilson went down to the forecabin, but two minutes later they came up again; it was empty. They searched the brig everywhere, but they found neither Will Halley nor his sailors.

'What, nobody?' exclaimed Glenarvan.

'Have they fallen into the sea?' asked Paganel.

'They may have done,' said John Mangles, anxious about their disappearance.

Going aft, he shouted, 'To the boat!'

Wilson and Mulrady followed him to launch it.

It had disappeared.

CHAPTER IV

AMATEUR SAILORS

WILL HALLEY and his crew, taking advantage of the night and of the passengers' sleep, had made their escape in the only boat

left in the brig. The captain, whose duty it was to be last to leave the ship, had been the first.

'The rascals have fled!' exclaimed John Mangles. 'Well, so much the better, my lord; that spares us a disagreeable scene.'

'Yes,' Glenarvan replied; 'besides, there's still a captain on board, John, and courageous, if not skilful, sailors—ourselves. Give your orders, we're ready to obey.'

The others applauded and placed themselves at Mangles' disposal.

'What's to be done?' asked Glenarvan.

The young captain looked round at the sea and the damaged rigging of the brig, and said, after some moments' reflection: 'We've got two ways of getting out of this, my lord. We can either float the ship or build a raft and get to the coast.'

'If the ship can be floated, we'd better do that,' answered Glenarvan.

'Yes, my lord, for once on land, what would become of us without any transport?'

'Let's get clear of the coast,' said Paganel. 'We must avoid New Zealand.'

'We've drifted very far south,' John continued. 'I shall have to take my bearings at noon, and if, as I imagine, we're below Auckland, I'll try to get along the coast with the brig.'

'But the damage to the brig?' asked Lady Glenarvan.

'I don't think it's serious, my lady,' answered Mangles. 'Unless the keel is damaged, we can manage.'

'Then we must first examine the ship,' said the major.

Glenarvan, John and Mulrady went down into the hold. There about two hundred tons of tanned hides were there, very badly stowed, and John at once threw part of this cargo overboard. The *Macquarie* was lying on her starboard side; the planking to larboard was found to be damaged, but as it was exposed to the air it was easy to repair, and the water could not get into it. Wilson caulked the joints with tow, then a copper plate was carefully nailed over them. They found only two feet of water in the hold, and the pumps could easily get that out. John found that on the whole the ship had suffered little: part of the false keel seemed likely to remain in the sand, but they could easily manage without it.

Wilson, after examining the interior of the ship, plunged into the sea to ascertain how she was situated. She had swung round more towards the north, and was trapped in a muddy sand-bank, the lower part of her stern and two-thirds of her keel being deeply embedded. The remainder of the vessel was afloat in water five fathoms deep, and the rudder was free and would answer to the helm.

The tides in the Pacific are not very strong, but Mangles counted upon being able to get the *Macquarie* afloat at high water. Much remained to be done before this could be accomplished, and the amateur sailors set to work with a will. Directed by Wilson, the Major and Paganel, went aloft and furled the top-sail as best they could, and young Robert, as agile as a cat and as bold as a middy, rendered good service during that difficult operation.

An anchor had then to be lowered astern in a line with the keel, so that it could be used to haul the vessel free. Such an operation presents no difficulty when a boat can be used, the anchor simply being rowed to the place where it is to be lowered. But they had no boat and would have to find a substitute: Glenarvan, had had enough experience of the sea to understand the necessity for this.

‘But what can we do without a boat?’ he asked John.

‘We’ll use the remains of the foremast and some empty casks. It will be difficult but not impossible, for the anchors aren’t heavy. So long as they don’t work loose, I think we’ve got a good chance.’

‘All hands’ were summoned on deck to help in the work. They cut away the foremast rigging and used the spars as a foundation for the raft, using empty casks as floats, adding a steering-oar, and then leaving it to the ebb-tide to float it aft of the ship.

The sun was approaching the meridian when the work was only half-finished, so Mangles left Glenarvan to supervise its completion and got ready to take his bearings. He had been lucky enough to find in Halley’s cabin a sextant, smothered in dirt but good enough for his purposes after he had cleaned it and taken it up on deck.

This instrument, by means of the mirrors with which it is equipped, brings the sun apparently to the horizon at noon, when

it is highest in the sky. Normally its telescope has to be directed at a sea horizon, where sea and sky meet. Here, however, the land formed a great promontory in the north, interposing between the observer and the horizon and thus making direct observation impossible.

When the true horizon is out of sight, it can be replaced by an artificial horizon—usually a shallow vessel filled with mercury, which forms a horizontal mirror. Having no mercury, John used some liquid tar, whose surface reflects the sun sufficiently well. Being off the west coast of New Zealand, he already knew his longitude; this was fortunate, for he could not have calculated it without a chronometer.

All he needed was the latitude, and the sextant showed him that the meridian of the sun was $68^{\circ} 30'$. The sun's distance from the zenith was this $21^{\circ} 30'$, and on that day, 3rd February, the sun's declination was $16^{\circ} 20'$; by adding this to the zenith distance he obtained a latitude of 38° .

The *Macquarie's* bearings were thus longitude $171^{\circ} 13'$ by latitude 38° ; there might be some insignificant errors produced by the imperfection of the instruments, but these would not matter.

By consulting the map which Paganel had bought at Eden, John Mangles saw that the shipwreck had taken place at the opening of Aotea Bay, above Cahua Point. Auckland is situated in the 37th parallel, and the *Macquarie* had been thrown one degree further to the south, so he had to go up one degree to reach the capital of New Zealand.

'Twenty-five miles at most,' said Glenarvan. 'That's nothing.'

'It will be nothing by sea, but it would be long and dangerous by land,' Paganel replied.

'So we must do all that is humanly possible to float the *Macquarie*,' Mangles decided.

That point settled, operations were resumed. It was high tide at 12.15 a.m., but John Mangles could not take advantage of this as his anchors had not been lowered. But he did not watch the *Macquarie* any less anxiously. Would she float under the action of the tide? This would be decided in about five minutes.

They waited. A cracking sound was heard; if this were not produced by the lifting of the vessel, the keel had been well

shaken: so far the brig had not moved but John had good hopes for the effects of the next high tide.

The work went on. At two the raft was ready. The anchor was lowered on to it, and John and Wilson went out with it. The ebb tide drifted them along, and they lowered the anchor at half a cable's length in ten fathoms of water. As soon as it was held firmly, the raft returned alongside. Then the large cathead anchor had to be lowered: the raft was again brought into use, and soon the second anchor was lowered beyond the other in fifteen fathoms of water. Then John and Wilson returned to the *Macquarie*. The cable was attached to the windlass, and they waited for the next high tide, which would be at one in the morning. It was then six in the afternoon.

John Mangles complimented his sailors, and told Paganel that, with courage and good conduct, he might one day become quartermaster.

Meantime Olbinett, after having helped in the various tasks, returned to the kitchen. Here he prepared a comfortable meal, which came just in time to satisfy the tremendous appetite such rough and unusual work had given to the crew.

After dinner John Mangles took the final precautions which still needed to be done to assure the success of the operation. He threw out much of the cargo to lighten the ship; but the rest of the bales, the heavy spars, and several tons of ballast, were shifted to make it easier to clear the stern. Wilson and Mulrady also rolled aft a number of casks, which they filled with water, to raise the prow of the brig. Midnight was near as they finished this work, and the crew were completely worn out now that all their strength was wanted to heave at the windlass. This altered John Mangles' plans.

Just then the wind was falling, and John, studying the horizon, noticed that the breeze had a tendency to veer round from S.W. to N.W. No sailor can mistake the aspect and colour of the clouds, and Wilson and Mulrady shared their captain's opinion. Mangles told Glenarvan, and suggested that floating the ship should be put off till the next day.

'This is why,' he explained. 'Firstly, we're very tired, and we shall need all our strength to get the ship off. And even if we did, I couldn't steer her through these dangerous breakers in such pro-

found darkness. Secondly, the wind promises to come to our aid, and I hope to profit by it. Tomorrow, unless I'm mistaken, it will blow from the north-west. We'll set some sails, and they'll help us raise the brig.'

These reasons were decisive and even Glenarvan and Paganel, the most impatient, gave in, and the operation was put off till the next day. The night passed without incident, though a watch was kept on the anchors. Daylight came, and Mangles' anticipations were realised: wind sprang up in the N.N.W., and gave very real kelp. The crew was called into action: Robert, Wilson, and Mulrady up the mainmast, and the major, Glenarvan, and Paganel on deck, to work the sails.

It was nine in the morning, another four hours having to elapse before high tide. They were not lost: John used them in constructing a jury mast to replace the foremast so as to get away from the dangerous coast as soon as the brig should be afloat.

In the meantime the tide came up. The surface of the sea rose in foamy waves, and the crests of the breakers gradually disappeared, like marine animals who plunge into their liquid element. As the hour approached for attempting the main operation, a feverish impatience seized the crew. No one spoke, but they all looked at John and awaited his orders.

At once the sea reached its highest point; it was just the moment when the water had stopped rising, and had not yet begun to sink. The mainsail and topsail were set, and the wind pressed them against the mast.

'To the windlass!' John shouted.

Glenarvan, Mulrady, and Robert on one side, and Paganel, the major, and Olbinett on the other, began to heave on the windlass. The ship trembled, and seemed about to rise. Perhaps another pair of arms might be suffice to get the ship off the sand-bank.

'Helena! Mary!' Glenarvan gave a shout.

The two women came to join their efforts to those of their companions.

But it was all in vain. The brig did not move, and the operation had failed. The ebb tide had already begun, and it was clear that, even with the aid of wind and sea, so small a crew could not get the brig afloat.

THE THEORY OF CANNIBALISM

JOHN MANGLES first attempt to save them had failed. Another must be tried without delay. It was clear that they could not move the *Macquarie*, and no less clear that they must abandon her. To wait on board for problematical help would be imprudent and foolish: before it could possibly reach them, the ship would have gone to pieces! The next storm, or even the next rough sea, would break her up. Before this inevitable destruction, took place, John was determined to reach land.

So he proposed to construct a raft, strong enough to carry the passengers with a supply of food to the New Zealand coast.

There was no time for discussion, only for action. The work was begun, and was far advanced before night overtook them.

Towards eight, after supper, while Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant were resting, Paganel and his friends discussed some serious questions as they walked the deck. Robert refused to leave them and he listened attentively, in the hope of being able to give them some help, or to share in some perilous enterprise.

Paganel asked Mangles if the raft could follow the coast as far as Auckland, instead of simply taking them to land.

John replied that this was impossible with so defective a means of transport.

‘And what we cannot attempt with a raft,’ asked Paganel, ‘could we have done with the small boat?’

‘Yes, if we had had to,’ Mangles answered.

‘Alas, those miserable wretches who abandoned us—’

‘Oh!’ Mangles replied, ‘they were drunk, and, because of the darkness, they no doubt paid for their cowardly desertion of us with their lives.’

‘All the worse for them, and for us, too,’ commented Paganel, ‘for the boat would have been useful.’

‘Never mind, Paganel,’ Glenarvan consoled him, ‘the raft will carry us to land.’

‘That is just what I want to avoid,’ the geographer protested.

‘What, a journey of twenty miles at most! After what we’ve

done in the Pampas and across Australia, it couldn't frighten even men worn out with fatigue.'

'My friends,' Paganel answered, 'I don't doubt either your courage or that of your companions. Twenty miles! It would be nothing in any other country than New Zealand. You won't suspect me of cowardice: I was the first to lead you across America and Australia. But, I repeat, anything would be better than venturing into this perfidious country.'

'Anything would be better than exposing ourselves to certain death on a stranded ship,' John Mangles retorted.

'What are you afraid of in New Zealand?' asked Glenarvan.

'The savages,' Paganel replied.

'The savages!' said Glenarvan. 'Couldn't we avoid them by following the coast? Besides, a few such wretched creatures need not frighten ten Europeans who are well armed and determined to defend themselves.'

'They aren't people to be despised,' Paganel explained. 'The New Zealanders form powerful tribes, who struggle against the English rule, who fight against the invaders. They often conquer them, and they always eat them when they get the chance!'

'Cannibals!' exclaimed Robert, 'cannibals!'

They heard him saying to himself, 'My sister, Lady Helena!'

'Don't be afraid,' Glenarvan consoled him, 'our friend Paganel is exaggerating!'

'I'm exaggerating nothing,' Paganel declared. 'Robert has shown himself a man, and I'm treating him as one by not hiding the truth from him. New Zealanders are the most cruel, not to say the most gluttonous, of anthropophagi. They devour everything that falls into their hands. War means for them only the hunting of that savoury game called man, and, it must be confessed, it is the only logical war. The Europeans kill their enemies and bury them. The savages kill their enemies and eat them; and, as one of my countrymen has well said, it is not so great a crime to roast your enemy when he is dead as to kill him when he doesn't want to die.'

'Paganel,' the major replied, 'there is room for discussion on the subject, but this isn't the time for it. Whether it is logical or not to be eaten, we have no wish for it to be our fate. But how

is it that Christianity hasn't conquered cannibalism?

'Do you think, then, that all the New Zealanders are Christians?' asked Paganel. 'There are only a few, and too often the missionaries themselves become the victims of these wretches. Last year the Rev. Mr. Walkner was martyred with horrible cruelty. The Maorists hanged him, and their wives tore out his eyes. They drank his blood and ate his brains. And this murder took place in 1864, at Opotiki, a few leagues from Auckland, under the very eyes of the English authorities. My friends, it needs centuries to change the nature of a race. What the Maoris have been they will remain for a long time yet. Their history is written in blood.'

'Bah!' exclaimed the major, 'aren't these tales mostly due to the imagination of travellers?'

'I'm making allowance for exaggeration,' answered Paganel. 'But trustworthy men have described it; missionaries, captains, and many others; I ought to believe them, and I do. The New Zealanders are by nature cruel, and at the death of their chiefs they chiefs they immolate human victims. They think that these sacrifices will appease the anger of the deceased, which might fall upon the living, and at the same time they offer him servants in the next world. But as they eat their deceased domestics after having massacred them, we may believe that their stomachs have as much to do with it as their superstition.'

'Still,' John Mangles remarked, 'I imagine that superstition plays a great part in cannibalism. That's why, if their religion were to change, their customs would change too.'

'There, friend John,' Paganel answered, 'you raise the grave question of the origin of cannibalism. Was it religion or hunger that first made men devour one another? This discussion would be useless just now. Why cannibalism exists has not been answered; but it exists, and that is a fact we have only too grave reasons to take into consideration.'

Paganel was speaking the truth. Cannibalism has become as chronic in New Zealand as in the Fiji Islands or Torres Strait. Superstition has evidently something to do with this odious custom; but there are cannibals simply because game is rare and hunger is great. Savages began by eating human flesh to satisfy

their hunger, then their priests made rules for and sanctified the monstrous custom. The meal became a ceremony.

Besides, in the eyes of the Maoris, nothing is more natural than to eat each other. The missionaries have often asked them about cannibalism, and enquired why they devoured one another. To which the chief answered that fish eat fish, that dogs eat men, and men eat dogs, and dogs eat each other. They have legends that relate how one god ate another god. With such precedents, how could they resist the pleasure of eating their neighbours?

‘What is more, the Zealanders claim that, in devouring a dead enemy, they absorb his spirit. They thus inherit his soul, his strength, and his valour. These dwell particularly in the brain, which always forms the dish of honour in their festivals.

Still, Paganel maintained, and not without reason, that it was hunger that urged the New Zealanders to cannibalism, and not only the savages of Oceania, but those of Europe.

‘Yes,’ he added, ‘cannibalism long reigned amongst the ancestors of the most civilised people; and – don’t take this personally—especially among the Scots.’

‘Indeed!’ MacNabbs exclaimed.

‘Yes, major,’ continued Paganel, ‘when you read certain passages in Saint Jerome on the Atticoli of Scotland, you’ll see what to think of your ancestors! And without going so far back during the reign of Elizabeth, just at the time when Shakespeare was dreaming of his Shylock, wasn’t Sawney Bean, a Scots bandit, executed for the crime of cannibalism? And what induced him to eat human flesh? Religion? No, hunger.’

‘Hunger?’ asked Mangles.

‘Hunger,’ Paganel repeated; ‘but, above all, the need that carnivorous animals have to eat flesh for the sake of the nitrogen contained in animal matter. It’s all very well to give work to the lungs by eating plants, but anyone who wants to be active and strong must repair the muscles by consuming meat. As long as the Maoris are not members of the Society of Vegetarians, so long will they eat flesh – and human flesh.’

‘Why not the flesh of animals?’ asked Glenarvan.

‘Because there aren’t any animals,’ Paganel replied, ‘and we have to know this, not to excuse, but to explain this custom of cannibalism. Beast, and even birds, are rare in this inhospitable

country. So the Maoris have always eaten human flesh. They have seasons for man-eating, as in civilised countries they have seasons for hunting. Then they have great fights, and whole tribes are served up on the tables of the conquerors.'

'So' according to you, Paganel,' said Glenarvan, 'cannibalism won't disappear until the time when sheep, oxen, and pigs swarm in the plains of New Zealand.'

'Granted, my lord; but it will be many years before the Maoris break themselves of the habit of eating the flesh of New Zealanders, which they prefer to every other sort; for the children will long enjoy what their fathers enjoyed. If we are to believe them, human flesh has the taste of pork, but with more flavour. The flesh of white men is less of a dainty, because the whites eat salt with their food; and that gives their flesh a special flavour, not much liked by the epicures.'

'They're hard to please,' commented the major. 'But do they eat their flesh cooked or raw?'

'What does that matter to you, Mr. MacNabbs?' Robert asked.

'My boy,' the major answered, gravely, 'if I'm to end my days under the teeth of a man-eater, I should prefer to be cooked.'

'Why?'

'To make sure of not being eaten alive!'

'Ah, major!' Paganel exclaimed, 'but suppose you were cooked alive?'

'The fact is,' replied the major, 'I wouldn't give half a crown either way.'

'Well, MacNabbs,' Paganel replied, 'as you are so anxious about this, understand that the New Zealanders always eat their flesh smoked or cooked. They are connoisseurs. But, for my part, the notion of being eaten is not specially agreeable! To finish one's existence in the stomach of a savage, pah!'

'The upshot of all this,' John Mangles summed it up, 'is that we must take care not to fall into the hands of the savages. Let us hope, too, that some day Christianity will abolish all these monstrous customs.'

'Yes, we'll hope so,' answered Paganel; 'but believe me, a savage who has once tasted human flesh won't easily give it up. Judge of this by the two following facts.'

'Let's hear them,' said Glenarvan.

'The first is recorded in the chronicles of the Society of Jesuits in Brazil. A Portuguese missionary one day went to see an old Brazilian woman who was very ill. She had only a few more days to live. The Jesuit instructed her in the truths of Christianity, which the dying woman received without question. Then, after attending to the nourishment of the soul, he thought of the nourishment of the body, and offered the penitent some European dainties. "Alas!" said the old woman, "my stomach won't take any kind of food. There is only one thing I'd like to taste, but, unfortunately, there's no one here who could get it for me." "What is that?" asked the priest. "Ah, my son! it is the hand of a small boy! I think I could crunch up the little bones with great pleasure!"'

'Ah,' Robert commented, 'it must be very good then?'

'My second story will answer you, my boy,' Paganel told him. 'One day a missionary reproached a cannibal for indulging in a habit so horrible, and so contrary to divine laws, as that of eating human flesh. "And it must be nasty," he added. "Ah, my father," answered the savage, giving a covetous look at the missionary, "say that God forbids it! but don't say it's nasty! If you could only taste it!"'

CHAPTER VI

INHOSPITABLE LAND

PAGANEL'S ACCOUNTS of New Zealand were indisputable. There could be no doubt of the savages' cruelty. There was danger in landing, but if the danger had been a hundred times greater they had to face it: John Mangles felt the need to leave without delay a vessel devoted to destruction. Between two perils, one certain, the other only probable, no hesitation was possible.

As to their chance of being picked up by a passing ship, they could not reasonably count upon that. The *Macquarie* was nowhere near the route frequented by vessels going to the different

ports of New Zealand. They take a course higher up for Auckland, or one lower down for New Plymouth. Now the shipwreck had taken place precisely between these two points, on the deserted coast of Ika-Na-Maoui. All ships try to avoid this part of New Zealand; and if the wind carries them near it, they fly from it as quickly as possible.

‘When shall we start?’ asked Glenarvan.

‘Tomorrow morning at ten,’ answered John Mangles. ‘The tide will serve at that time.’

The next day, 5th February, at eight, the raft was ready.

John gave every attention to the rigging. The raft they had used for lowering the anchors was not large enough to transport passengers and provisions. The one they needed must be solid, capable of being steered, and of resisting the sea during a sail of nine miles. Only the masts could furnish the materials necessary for its construction.

Wilson and Mulrady set to work and cut down the main mast, which fell with a splash into the water, breaking the starboard bulwarks. The main components of the raft were then set afloat, and were solidly fastened together. John took care to add half-a-dozen empty casks so as to raise the raft out of the water, and Wilson made a sort of flooring of open planks, so as to let the water through. They also nailed some casks all round it to protect themselves against the waves. That morning John, seeing that the wind was favourable, had a sail hoisted, and a large oar was fixed aft as a sort of rudder.

The raft was now ready to resist the swell of the waves. But if the wind should change, could it be steered to reach the coast? That was the question.

At nine they began to load the raft, and enough food was put on board to last till they reached Auckland, for they must not count upon getting anything in that inhospitable country.

Olbinett put on the raft what remained of the preserved food provided for the *Macquarie's* voyage, but there was little of this and they had to content themselves with coarser food, ship's biscuits of an inferior quality, and two barrels of salted fish.

These provisions were put into casks impervious to the seawater, and fastened by strong ropes to the mast. The arms and ammunition were placed where they would be safe and dry:

fortunately the travellers were well armed with revolvers and rifles.

An anchor was also put on board by John Mangles in case they were unable to reach land at high tide, and had to anchor out at sea.

At ten the tide began to rise. The wind was blowing gently from the north-east and a light swell rose on the surface of the sea.

‘Are we ready?’ John Mangles asked.

‘All ready, captain,’ Wilson replied.

‘On board then!’

Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant went down a rough ladder, and took the places at the foot of the mast on the food-casks.

Wilson took the helm. John stationed himself near the mast, and Mulrady cut the moorings fastening them to the ship. The sail was spread, and the raft began to sail towards the land under the double action of tide and wind. The coast was nine miles off, a trifling distance, which a boat with good oars could have cleared in three hours: with the raft, the most they could hope to do would be to reach land with the one tide. But if the wind fell, the ebb tide would carry them out to sea and they would have to anchor till next flow. Still John Mangles hoped to succeed. The tide having begun to flow at ten, they ought to reach the land by three, or they would have to lie at anchor or be carried out to sea.

The beginning of the journey was favourable. Little by little the dark crests of the reefs disappeared as with the tide the waves rose between them and the shore. Great skill and care were needed to avoid the submerged rocks, and to steer a vessel answering so little to the helm and so easily driven from its course.

At midday they were still five miles from land, but they were able to distinguish several features of the shore. To the north-east rose a mountain two thousand five hundred feet high, looking rather like the profile of a grinning monkey turned upside down. This was the Pirongia; according to the map it was situated exactly upon the thirty-eighth parallel.

At half-past twelve Paganel noticed that all the reefs had disappeared under the rising tide.

'Except one,' Lady Glenarvan corrected him.

'Where's that, madam?' asked Paganel.

'There,' Lady Glenarvan indicated a black point about a mile ahead.

'Let's try to fix its position, so as not to run on to it,' answered Paganel, 'for the tide will soon cover it.'

'It's just by the northern ridge of the mountains,' said John Mangles. 'Try to keep well out, Wilson.'

'Yes, captain,' the sailor answered, bearing with all his weight on the extempore rudder.

In half an hour they gained nearly a mile. But, strange to say, the black point still showed above the waves.

John looked at it carefully and borrowed Paganel's telescope.

'It isn't a reef,' he decided, after a moment's observation, 'it's something floating, rising and falling with the waves.'

'Mightn't it be part of one of the *Macquarie's* masts?' asked Lady Glenarvan.

'No,' replied Glenarvan. 'No débris could drift so far from the ship.'

'Wait!' cried John Mangles. 'I know what it is, it's the small boat!'

'The boat!' exclaimed Glenarvan.

'Yes, my lord, keel uppermost!'

'The unfortunate men have perished then!' exclaimed Lady Glenarvan.

'Yes,' madam,' John Mangles replied. 'They must have perished, for amongst these reefs, on a rough sea, and in such a dark night, they were rushing to certain death.'

'May Heaven have pity on them!' murmured Mary Grant.

During some moments they all looked in silence at the frail boat, which was now approaching them. It had obviously capsized about four miles from land, and doubtless not one of those it carried had survived.

'The boat may be of some use to us,' Glenarvan suggested.

'Make for it, Wilson,' Mangles gave orders.

Their course was altered, but the wind was gradually falling and they did not reach the boat for two hours. Mulrady, standing aft, warded off the shock, and drew the boat alongside.

'Empty?' asked Mangles.

'Yes, captain,' the sailor answered, 'and the bottom's stove in. It's no use to us.'

'Well, I prefer our raft after all,' said Mangles; 'a very slight shock would have smashed that boat to pieces. Make direct for land, Wilson.'

The tide would serve for another hour, and they were able to clear another two miles, but then the wind fell; it seemed to have a tendency to spring up from land. The raft stayed motionless, and soon it began to drift out to sea with the ebb tide.

'Drop the anchor!' John exclaimed.

Mulrady let it fall in five fathoms of water, and preparations were made for a pretty long stoppage. The tide would not serve again before nine p.m., and as Mangles would not sail during the night, the raft would have to be at anchor till five a.m.

Land was in sight less than three miles off and a tolerably strong current set it, and seemed to carrying them towards the coast. When Glenarvan learnt that they must pass the night on board, he had asked John why he did not take advantage of this current to approach the coast.

'You're deceived by an optical illusion, my lord. Although the sea seems to be moving, it isn't. The waves are a mere circling of the water, nothing more. Throw a piece of wood into the sea and you'll see that it will remain motionless until the ebb tide begins. There is nothing for us but patience.'

'And now for dinner,' said the major.

Olbinett placed before them some dried meat and a dozen biscuits, ashamed to offer such meagre fare to his master. But it was accepted with a good grace, even by the ladies, though they were suffering somewhat from the rough sea.

The raft was tossed about, and it pulled strongly at the anchor. If the cable had given way, it would have floated out to sea. John's fears can be easily understood: the cable might break or the anchor lose its hold, and either mishap would be terrible.

Night was coming on. Already the sun's disc, the colour of blood, had disappeared below the horizon. Long lines of light in the west were reflected in the waves, and made them look like sheets of liquid silver. One point could be clearly seen in the west

—it was the wreck of the *Macquarie*, immovable on her keel. Soon all was lost in the darkness of night.

What a wretched situation for these poor shipwrecked people on this narrow raft, surrounded by darkness! Some fell asleep, worn out with anxiety; the rest were unable to sleep even for half an hour.

With the rising tide the wind also rose. It was six in the morning and time was pressing. John gave orders to raise the anchor; but its floats, because of the pull of the cable, had become imbedded in the sand, and without a windlass it was impossible to raise it. Half an hour passed in vain attempts, and then John became impatient, and would wait no longer. A stroke of the hatchet set free the raft, which was driven before the wind, aided by a current of two knots.

The sail was spread, and they moved slowly towards the land, which showed itself in grey masses against a background of sky, lit up by the rising sun. The reefs were cleverly avoided and doubled, but what a struggle to reach this New Zealand, which might prove so inhospitable!

At nine land was less than a mile off, and the reefs bristled around them. They had to find some practicable landing-place. The wind went down and at last fell entirely, so that the sail flapped against the mast and John ordered it to be reefed. The tide alone carried the raft towards the coast, but enormous masses of rock retarded their progress.

At ten John found they had come to a standstill, three cables' length from the shore. But they had no anchor! Must they be carried back out to sea by the ebb-tide? John clenched his hands and, his heart devoured by anxiety, threw a fierce look upon this impracticable coast.

A shock was felt, but this time it was fortunate for themselves. The raft stopped: it had been thrown by a great wave upon a sandbank, twenty-five fathoms from the coast.

Glenarvan, Robert, Wilson, and Mulrady threw themselves into the water, and the raft was firmly moored to the rocks. The ladies, carried from rock to rock, reached land without even having wet the hem of their dresses, and soon all of them, with their food and weapons, had at last set foot upon the formidable shores of New Zealand.

CHAPTER VII

IN NEW ZEALAND

GLENARVAN WANTED, without losing an hour, to follow the coast towards Auckland. But towards morning the sky was full of threatening clouds, and about eleven they condensed into violent rain. The refugees had to look for shelter at once.

Wilson was lucky enough to find a cave, hollowed by the sea in basaltic rocks, on the shore, and there the travellers took refuge. They found a quantity of dried seaweed thrown up into the cave by the sea; this made a natural couch, of which they were glad to make use. Some wood was piled up at the entrance of the cave and made into a fire, so that they were able to dry and warm themselves.

John hoped that such violent rain would soon be over, but hours passed without any of its fury abating. Towards noon the wind freshened, and the squall grew worse. This was enough to try the patience of the most patient of men. But what was to be done? It would have been folly to brave such a storm. Moreover, it was only a few day's journey to Auckland; if they could keep out of the way of the savages, a delay of twelve hours could do them no great harm.

During this forced halt, conversation turned upon the incidents of the recent war in New Zealand. Indeed, to understand and realise the seriousness of the plight in which these poor shipwrecked people found themselves, something must be known of the history of the struggle which had then stained the island of Ika-Na-Maoui with blood.

Since Abel Tasman reached Captain Cook's Strait, 16th December, 1642, the New Zealanders had remained free in their independent islands. No European Power dreamt of seizing upon this Archipelago, which commanded the Pacific Ocean: the missionaries alone, who were established at different points, brought these new countries the benefits of civilisation.

Some, however, and especially the Anglicans, prepared the New Zealand chiefs to bend to the English yoke, and persuaded some of them to sign a letter, addressed to Queen Victoria, asking for her protection. But the most far-seeing saw the folly of this

step, and one of them, after having put upon the letter a copy of his tattoo marks, gave utterance to these prophetic words, 'We have lost our country; for the future it is no longer ours. Soon the stranger will come and seize upon it, and we shall be slaves.'

On 29th January, 1840, the sloop *Herald* arrived at the Bay of Islands, at the north of Ika-Na Naoui. Hobson, her captain, landed at the village of Korora Reka, and the inhabitants were invited to a general assembly in the Protestant Church. Then the titles Captain Hobson held from the Queen of England were read out.

On 5th January next the principal New Zealand chiefs were invited to meet the English resident in the village of Paia. Captain Hobson tried to obtain their submission, explaining that the Queen had sent troops and ships to protect them, that their rights should be guaranteed, and their liberty should remain undisturbed, provided that they would sell their land to Queen Victoria. Most of the chiefs, finding this too dear a price to pay for protection, refused to consent. But promises and presents had more power over these savage natures than the grand words of Captain Hobson, and the prize was secured.

Since 1840, nothing had happened in that region that Jacques Paganel did not know.

'Madam,' he replied to Lady Glenarvan's question, 'I must repeat what I have before said—that the New Zealanders form a courageous people, who, after having given way for an instant, resisted, foot by foot, the encroachments of the English. The Maoris tribes are organised like the ancient Scottish clans. The men are proud and brave and some tall, with straight hair, like the Maltese or the Bagdad Jews, and of a superior race; others small and squat, like mulattos, but all of them robust, haughty, and warlike. There was a celebrated chief named Hihi, a true Vercingetorix. You need not be surprised, then, if the war with the English should go on for ever in the territory of Ika-Na-Mauri, for there lives the famous tribe of the Waikatos, whom William Thompson led to the defence of the country.'

'But,' asked John Mangles, 'aren't the English masters of the principal places in New Zealand?'

'Certainly, John,' Paganel answered. 'After Captain Hobson, who had become governor had taken possession of the island,

nine colonies were founded in the most advantageous positions. Four are in the northern island, five in the southern. Important commercial towns rose on every side. When we arrive at Auckland you will admire, without reserve, the situation of this southern Corinth, overlooking its narrow isthmus, thrown like a bridge over the Pacific Ocean, and other towns are already flourishing and populous.

'Remember, too, that they are not a mere assemblage of huts, or an agglomeration of savages, but real towns, with ports, cathedrals, banks, docks, botanical gardens, natural history museums, acclimatation societies, newspapers, hospitals, benevolent institutions, philosophical institutes, Freemasons' lodges, clubs, choral societies, theatres, and universal exhibitions, like London or Paris! And if my memory is correct, it is in this very year and perhaps at the very moment when I'm speaking to you, that the industrial products of the entire world are displayed in a country of cannibals.'

'What! Notwithstanding the war with the natives?' asked Lady Helena.

'The English, madam, think very little about war!' Paganel explained. 'They fight, and lay themselves open to fighting, and think nothing of it: they even build railways under the fire of New Zealanders. Near Auckland, two railways run through the principal points occupied by the insurgents. I would wager that the engine-drivers fired at them from the locomotives.'

'But whereabouts is the interminable war going on?' John Mangles asked.

'It's six months since we left Europe,' replied Paganel. 'and I don't know what has happened since our departure, except some few facts that I have read in the papers while we were crossing Australia. But at that time they were fighting in the Ika-Na-Maoui island.'

'And when did this war begin?' asked Mary Grant.

'You mean begin again, Miss Mary,' said Paganel, 'for the first revolt took place in eighteen fortyfive. It was towards the end of eighteen sixtythree it recommenced; but a long time before that the Maoris were preparing to throw off the English rule. Some of the natives tried to bring about the election of a Maori chief, and wanted to make old Potatau a king, and his village,

between the rivers Waikato and Waipa, the capital of the new kingdom. This Potatau was an old man more astute than brave, but he had an energetic and intelligent prime minister, a descendant of the tribe who lived in the isthmus of Auckland before the foreigners came.

'This minister, William Thompson, became the soul of this war of independence and cleverly reorganised the Maori troops. Under his inspiration a Taranaki chief united all the scattered tribes; another chief of Waikato joined the Land League, a true league for the public good, intended to prevent the natives from selling their land to the English Government; they had banquets, just as they have in civilised countries before a revolution. The British papers began to report these alarming symptoms, and the Government became seriously alarmed about the intrigues of the Land League. In short, all minds were excited; the mine was ready to explode. It only wanted the spark, or rather the clash of the two interests, to produce an outbreak.'

'And this clash?' asked Glenarvan.

'It took place in eighteen sixty,' answered Paganel, 'in the Taranaki province, on the south-west coast of Ika-Na-Maoui. A native owned six hundred acres of land near New Plymouth and sold them to the English Government. But when the surveyors came to measure the land the chief objected, and he built on the six hundred acres in dispute a camp, defended by high palisades. A few days later, Colonel Gold, at the head of his troops, destroyed this camp, and then was fired the first shot of this national war.'

'Are there many Maoris?' asked John Mangles.

'The Maori population has been much reduced during the last century,' replied the geographer. 'In seventeen sixty-nine, Cook estimated that there were four hundred thousand inhabitants. In eighteen forty-five, the census of the native Protectorate showed a decrease of a hundred and nine thousand. The massacres of the invaders, the maladies that the "fire-water" produced, had decimated their numbers; but in the two islands there still remained fifty thousand inhabitants, of whom thirty thousand were warriors, who kept the European troops in check for a long time.'

'Has the revolt succeeded up till now?' Lady Glenarvan inquired.

'Yes, madam, and the English themselves have often admired the courage of the New Zealanders who unite to pillage the colonies. In eighteen sixtythree, after a long and murderous struggle, the Maoris occupied an excellent position upon the heights of Waikato, at the end of a chain of steep hills, covered by three lines of defence. Native prophets called all the population to the defence of the soil, and promised the extermination of the "pakekas," the whites. General Cameron, who commanded three thousand men, granted no quarter to the Maoris, because of the barbarous murder of Captain Sprent.

'Many bloody battles took place, and some lasted twelve hours without the natives showing any sign of giving in. It was the savage tribe of Waikatos, under the orders of William Thompson, that formed the core of the independent army: he at first commanded two thousand five hundred warriors, then eight thousand. Even the women took their part in the hardest part of this holy war. But right does not always mean success. After some bloody combats, General Cameron conquered the Waikato, an empty, depopulated district, for the Maoris escaped him on all sides. Four hundred Maoris shut up in the fortress of Orakan, and besieged by a thousand English, without food or water, refused to yield. Then, in open daylight, they cut themselves a road through the troops and escaped into the marshes.'

'Did the submission of Waikato end the sanguinary war?' asked John Mangles.

'Alas! No,' Paganel replied. 'The English decided to march upon Taranki province, and to besiege the fortress of Mataitawa, under the command of William Thompson. But they did not gain possession of it without great losses.'

'And, according to your opinion, Paganel,' said Glenarvan, 'the scene of this great struggle was in the provinces of Taranaki and Auckland?'

'I think so.'

'This very province, on which we've been thrown by the shipwreck of the *Macquarie*?'

'Precisely. We have landed a few miles below the harbour of

Kawhia, where probably there still floats the national flag of the Maoris.'

'So we shall do wisely to go towards the north?' Glenarvan suggested.

'Very wisely,' Paganel replied. 'New Zealanders are much incensed against the Europeans, and particularly against the English. So we must avoid falling into their hands.'

'Perhaps we may meet some European troops?' said Lady Glenarvan. 'That would be very lucky.'

'Perhaps, madam,' the geographer replied, 'but I don't expect it. Isolated detachments do not willingly fight in the open country, where the smallest bush might hide a clever sharpshooter. So I cannot count upon a military escort. But some missions are established upon the west coast, which we are to follow, and we can easily go from one to another as far as Auckland. I even hope to come upon the route that Hodistatter worked out to Waikato.'

'Was he a traveller, Mr. Paganel?' asked Robert Grant.

'Yes, my boy; he was a member of the scientific commission embarked on board the Australian frigate, the *Novara*, during her voyage of circumnavigation in eighteen fifty-eight.'

'Mr. Paganel,' asked Robert, whose eyes were sparkling at the thought of great geographical expeditions, 'have there been celebrated travellers to New Zealand like Burke and Stuart to Australia?'

'Yes, my child, a few naturalists, but though many of them paid for their passion for adventure with their lives, they are less famous than the Australian or African travellers.'

'And do you know their history?' asked young Grant.

'I know something of it, my boy, and as I see you love knowledge as much as I do, I'll relate it to you.'

'And we'll listen too,' said Lady Glenarvan. 'It won't be the first time that the bad weather has enabled us to learn something. Please begin, Mr. Paganel.'

'As you will, madam,' the geographer replied, 'but my story won't be a long one. This is not a story of brave discoverers, who have struggled hand to hand with the Australian Minotaur. New Zealand is too small a country to offer any great difficulties to the investigations of savants. So my heroes are hardly to be called

travellers, but only tourists—victims of the most prosaic accidents.'

He described these at some length and ended by explaining that fairly recently some explorers had been lost sight of.

'But why may they not be safe and sound with some New Zealand tribe?' asked Lady Glenarvan. 'It's at least permissible to have doubts of their death.'

'Alas! No, madame,' replied Paganel, 'because a year after the catastrophe, they had not reappeared; and when one is a year without reappearing in a country like New Zealand,' he murmured in low tones, 'it is because one is irrevocably lost.'

CHAPTER VIII

THIRTY MILES TO THE NORTH

ON 7TH FEBRUARY, at six in the morning, Glenarvan gave the signal to start. The rain had ceased during the night and the sky was covered with light grey clouds: the temperature being reduced by the rain, the journey was not likely to prove so fatiguing as they had expected.

Paganel had measured on the map a distance of eighty miles between Cahua and Auckland, this would take them eight days, at ten miles in twenty-four hours. But instead of following the winding sea-shore, he thought it would be better to make for the confluence of Waikato and the Waipa. There they would come upon the Overland Mail route, which crosses from Napier to Auckland. Thence it would be easy to reach Drury, where they would find an excellent hotel.

The travellers, each carrying part of the food, began to make their way along the shores of Aotea Bay. They prudently kept close together in case of a surprise by the natives.

Soon the little party came to some sand entirely composed of bivalve shells, and dry bones, mixed with much oxide of iron. If a magnet had been held near the ground, it would at once have been covered with brilliant crystals.

Upon the shore sported some marine animals, who were in no hurry to move away, seals with their round heads and expressive eyes and gentle faces. These animals have been poetised as enchanting sirens, although their voices are nothing but an inharmonious croaking. They are very numerous upon the New Zealand shores, and are hunted for their oil and fur.

Amongst them were three or four sea-elephants, bluish grey, and twenty-five or thirty feet long. These enormous creatures were stretched idly upon the ground, erecting their trunks, and shaking in a grimacing style the rough silk of their long twisted moustaches, corkscrews curled like a dandy's beard. Robert watched these creatures with much interest, and then he shouted in great surprise—

‘Look at the seals! They’re eating pebbles!’

Many of the animals were, in fact, swallowing pebbles from the beach with gluttonous avidity.

‘Well, one thing is certain,’ Paganel agreed, ‘no one can deny that these animals graze upon the shingle.’

‘What a strange food!’ said Robert, ‘and how indigestible!’

‘It isn’t for nourishment, my boy, that they swallow the pebbles, but for ballast. It increases their specific weight, so that they can sink more easily into the water. When they return to land they throw up these stones without ceremony. Now watch them plunging into the sea.’

Half a dozen seals slowly dragged themselves along the shore and disappeared in the water. But Glenarvan was unwilling to lose precious time by waiting for their return to see the process of unballasting; and, much to the regret of Paganel and Robert, the journey was continued.

At ten, they made a halt for breakfast at the foot of some great basaltic rocks, close to the sea. An oyster bank supplied them with a good quantity of these molluscs: they were small and of a very agreeable flavour, but by Paganel’s advice Olbinett cooked them over a wood fire, and they proved so delicious that dozen after dozen disappeared.

Their meal finished, the travellers continued their journey along the shores of the bay. A whole world of sea-birds had taken refuge upon the summits of the rocks; frigate-birds, seagulls, and the great albatrosses stayed motionless upon the sharp peaks.

By four, they had travelled ten miles without trouble or fatigue, and the ladies wanted to push on till nightfall. Then they had to change their course and to go round the foot of some mountains to the north, to reach the valley of the Waipa.

In the distance immense prairies appeared to stretch far out of sight, and promised easy walking. But when the travellers reached the borders of this field of verdure they were sadly undeceived. Instead of green pastures, they found a copse of brushwood, covered with white flowers, mixed with the tall innumerable ferns that grow so luxuriantly in New Zealand, and it was with great difficulty that they forced a road through such a tangle.

Yet by eight the first ridge of the Hakarihoata Range was turned, and they encamped for the night. After fourteen miles, it was time to think of rest. Having no other shelter, they lay down to sleep at the foot of some magnificent Norfolk pines, and made themselves as comfortable as circumstances would allow.

Glenarvan took rigorous precautions for the night; he and his companions, well armed, watched, in pairs, till daybreak. They dare not light a fire: the flames are a good protection against wild beasts but there are neither tigers, lions, bears, nor any other savage animals in New Zealand. Certainly the natives are a good substitute, but a fire would only too surely attract these two-footed jaguars. The travellers would have had a comfortable night except for the sand-flies, whose sting is very disagreeable, and for an audacious family of rats, who nibbled away at their food-bags.

The next day, 8th February, Paganel awoke more confident, and almost reconciled to the country. The Maoris had not appeared, nor had they even menaced him in his dreams. He explained his satisfaction to Glenarvan.

'I think,' he said, 'that we shall finish this little journey without difficulty. This evening we shall reach the streams, and that point once passed, we have little to fear from an encounter with the natives on the road to Auckland.'

'What distance have we to go to reach the confluence?' asked Glenarvan.

'Fifteen miles, about the same distance we travelled yesterday.'

'But we shan't make much progress if this interminable brushwood keeps obstructing our path.'

'No,' Paganel answered, 'we'll follow the banks of the Waipa, and we'll find that an easy road.'

'Let's set out then,' Glenarvan saw that the ladies were ready to start.

During the first part of the journey, the close brushwood much retarded their progress and neither horses nor waggons passed them on the road. Even if carriage-roads are ever made through these forests New Zealand will not be practicable except for foot travellers. The ferns, whose species are innumerable, seem to second the Maoris in obstinately defending the national soil.

So the little party met a thousand difficulties in passing through the plains, from which rose the hills of Hakarihoata. But before noon they had reached the banks of the Waipa, and they went on northwards, without further difficulty, along the banks of the river.

It was a charming valley, intersected by little creeks of pure fresh water, which ran joyously through the bushes. Some fine trees rose here and there in the foreground, their trunks surrounded by a variety of ferns.

Among the branches of the trees flew and chattered some cockatoos; the green *kakariki*, with a red band round its neck; the *taupo*, ornamented with a fine pair of black whiskers; also a kind of parrot as big as a duck, having russet plumage, and a brilliant colouring underneath the wings, called by naturalists the 'Southern Nestor.'

The major and Robert, without leaving their companions, shot some snipe and partridges, which were hiding under the low grass. So as to lose no time, Olbinett plucked them as he went along.

Paganel, caring little for the nutritive qualities of game, wanted to catch some birds peculiar to New Zealand; a naturalist's curiosity silenced the traveller's appetite. If his memory did not deceive him, there were some curious things about the habits of the bird called *tui* by the natives, sometimes 'the mocker' because of its incessant sneering laugh, and sometimes 'the parson', because it has black plumage and a white band round its neck.

'This tui,' he told the major, 'gets so fat in the winter that it

is quite ill, and cannot fly. Then it tears open its breast with its beak to relieve itself of some of the fat, and so make itself lighter. Isn't that strange, MacNabbs?'

'So strange,' the major answered, 'that I don't believe a word of it.'

Paganel, much to his regret, could not meet with even one of these birds to show the incredulous major the bleeding wounds in their breasts. But he was more fortunate with a strange creature which, under the joint persecutions of men, dogs, and cats, has fled towards uninhabited countries, and seems likely to disappear from the New Zealand fauna. Robert, while searching about like a ferret, found in a nest formed of interlaced roots, a brace of very strange-looking birds—with neither wings nor tail, with four toes to each foot, a long beak like a woodcock's, and covered with white plumage. Strange creatures, that seem to mark the transition from oviparous animals to mammalia. These were the New Zealand kiwi, the *apterix australi* of the naturalists.

This bird is peculiar to the country, though it has, with great difficulty, been introduced into Zoological Gardens of Europe. Its half-developed form, its comical movements, have always attracted the attention of travellers; and during the great exploration of Oceania, d'Urville was especially enjoined by the Academy of Sciences to bring back a specimen of these singular birds. But notwithstanding the rewards promised to the natives, he could not procure a living kiwi.

Paganel, delighted with such good fortune, tied the birds together and carried them with him exultingly, meaning to present them to the Jardin des Plantes. The confident geographer already read in imagination upon the finest cage in the Gardens the delightful inscription 'Presented by M. Jacques Paganel.'

The little party travelled along the banks of the Waipa without fatigue. The country was deserted; no trace of natives, no path to indicate the presence of man in these plains. The water of the river rushed along between high banks, or glided past smooth tracts of sand. The view was limited on the east by hills; their strange forms, their outlines half-hidden in the mists, made them resemble gigantic animals worthy of the antediluvian epochs. The contorted masses were essentially volcanic, as indeed is the whole of New Zealand; it emerges more and more from the water every

day, and certain points have risen six feet in twenty years. The volcanic commotion still going on in its depths escapes in many places through geysers and volcanic craters.

By four, nine miles had been covered. According to the map which Paganel consulted incessantly, the confluence of the two streams lay less than five miles off. There the route to Auckland passed, and there they were to camp.

As to the fifty miles which separated them from the capital, two or three days would be enough to cover that distance; and only eight hours if they should meet with the mailcoach which travelled between Auckland and Hawkes Bay twice a month.

'We shall have to camp out tonight,' said Glenarvan.

'Yes,' answered Paganel, 'but I hope it's for the last time.'

'So much the better; for these are trying times for Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant.'

'And they go through it all without a complaint,' added John Mangles. 'But if I'm not mistaken, Mr. Paganel, you spoke of a village at the confluence of the two rivers.'

'Yes,' the geographer agreed, 'here it is marked on Johnston's map. It is Ngarnavahia, about two miles below the confluence.'

'~~Couldn't~~ we lodge there for the night? Perhaps we may find a comfortable hotel there.'

'An hotel!' cried Paganel, 'an hotel in a Maori village! Not even an inn, nor a public-house! This village is only a cluster of native huts; and instead of seeking shelter there, my advice is to keep as far away from it as possible.'

'Your fears are always awake, Paganel,' said Glenarvan.

'My lord, with the Maoris distrust is safer than trust. I do not know what terms they are on with the English, whether the insurrection has been subdued or victorious, or whether we shall fall right into the battle. People of our degree would be a good prize, and so I think it wiser to avoid this village, and all possibility of meeting the natives. Once in Drury, we shall be able to rest at our ease from the fatigues of our journey.'

The geographer's opinion prevailed. Lady Glenarvan preferred to pass another night out of doors rather than run any risk. Neither she nor Mary Grant wanted to halt, so they went on following the windings of the river.

Two hours later, the first shades of night began to fall on the

mountains. The sun, as it set, emitted some last golden rays, which gilded the tops of the mountains in the east, and seemed like a sudden greeting to the travellers. Glenarvan and his party quickened their pace, for they had to reach the meeting of the two rivers before night set in. In these latitudes there is scarcely any twilight, and night soon follows the setting of the sun. Unfortunately a thick mist rose from the ground, and made it very difficult for them to find their road.

Fortunately hearing took the place of sight, now rendered useless by the darkness. Soon a murmur louder than before indicated the union of the two rivers in one bed. At eight the little party arrived at the point where the Waipa loses itself in the Waikato, not without some roaring of the dashing waves.

'There's the Waikato!' exclaimed Paganel, 'and the road to Auckland goes up-stream along the right bank.'

'We shall see that tomorrow,' the major replied. 'Let's encamp here. I fancy the dense shadows are those of a little thicket which has grown expressly to afford us shelter. Let us sup. and then go to bed.'

'Let's make our supper of biscuits and dried meat, but without lighting a fire,' said Paganel. 'We have come thus far without the natives finding us, it would be a pity to be rash now. Fortunately for us, this fog makes us invisible.'

Everyone conformed to the geographer's severe regulations. The cold supper was eaten in silence; and soon the travellers, worn out by a fatiguing walk of fifteen miles, were asleep.

CHAPTER IX

THE NATIONAL RIVER

NEXT DAY a thick mist still rested on the river, but the rays of the sun soon dispersed this, and the Waikato appeared in all its morning beauty. After being joined by the Waipa, it rushes foaming along for a quarter of a mile and then goes calmly on its way to the Pacific.

When the mist rose, a canoe could be seen crossing the Waikato. Seventy feet long, five feet wide, and three feet deep, the prow raised like a Venetian gondola, it had been hollowed entirely from the trunk of a fir-tree and a layer of dry fern covered its floor. Eight oars made it skim swiftly over the surface of the water, while a man seated in the stern steered it with a kind of paddle.

He was a finely-formed native, about forty-five years old, with a broad chest, muscular limbs, and strong hands and feet. His prominent forehead was marked with deep wrinkles; the fierce glare of his sinister countenance made him formidable-looking. He was a Maori chief of high rank, as was seen by the fine tattooing which covered his face and body. Two black spirals started from his aquiline nose, encircled his yellow eyes, met on his dazzling teeth, and his chin, were covered with a regular pattern, which reached to his robust chest. This tattooing, the '*moko*' of the New Zealander, is a mark of distinction, and nobody has it who has not figured valiantly in several combats, nor can slaves and the lower orders aspire to it.

The famous chiefs are known by the fineness, precision, and nature of the design, which often includes animal figures. Some of them submit as many as five times to this painful operation. 'In New Zealand the more illustrious they are, the more they're illustrated.'

Dumont d'Urville has given some curious details about this custom. He points out that the moko takes the place of the armorial bearings of which European families are so proud. But he points out a difference between these two signs of distinction, that the European armorial bearings generally bear witness to the merit of the individual who first obtained them, without proving anything as to those of his descendants; while, on the contrary, the moko of the New Zealander is a certain proof of extraordinary personal courage.

Independent of this, however, the tattooing of the Maoris is very useful to them. It gives the layers of the skin an extra thickness, so that it can better resist the changes of temperature in the different seasons, as well as the incessant mosquito bites.

As to the chief who steered the canoe, there could be no doubt of his high rank. The sharp bones of the albatross, used by the

Maori tattooers, had scored his face, in close deep lines, five separate times, and that he had often distinguished himself might be seen in his haughty bearing. Draped around him was a large mat of phormium, ornamented with dog-skins. He wore in his ears long pendants of green jade, and round his neck glittered a collar of the pounamous, a sort of sacred stone to which the New Zealanders attach some superstitious idea. By his side hung a gun of English make, and a *patoupatou*, a sort of two-edged hatchet, of emerald colour, and eighteen inches long.

Near him were nine warriors of lower rank but also of fierce appearance, armed, and some of them still suffering from recent wounds, wrapped in their cloaks, and perfectly motionless. Three savage-looking dogs were stretched out at their feet. The eight rowers, who seemed to be the chief's servants or slaves, rowed vigorously, and the canoe sped along very swiftly. In the centre of this long boat, with their feet tied but their hands free, were ten European prisoners.

These were Lord and Lady Glenarvan, Mary Grant, Robert, Paganell, the major, John Mangles, the steward, and the two sailors.

On the previous evening the little party, deceived by the thick mist, had encamped in the midst of a large body of natives. Towards the middle of the night they had been surprised during their sleep, made prisoners, and carried on board the boat. They had not been ill-treated, but they found it vain to resist, for their arms and ammunition were in the hands of the savages.

They soon found out, from some English words the natives used, that these had been driven back by the British troops, and were about to regain the heights of Waikato. The Maori chief, after an obstinate resistance, his principal warriors having been massacred, was about to make a new appeal to the river tribes before rejoining the indomitable William Thompson, who was still struggling against the conquerors. This chief's name was Kai-Koumou, a sinister name in the native language, meaning, 'He who eats the limbs of his enemies.' He was brave and daring, but his cruelty equalled his valour and no pity was to be looked for in him. His name was well known among the English soldiers, and a price had been put on his head by the Governor of New Zealand.

This terrible catastrophe had befallen Lord Glenarvan just as he thought the worst of his troubles were over. But to look at his cold, calm face, no one would have guessed the extent of his anguish. Profoundly religious, he would not despair of the justice of God in so righteous an enterprise; and in the midst of so many perils, he never regretted for a single instant the generous impulse that had led him into this land of savages.

His companions were worthy of him; they shared his noble thoughts, and from their calm proud bearing, no one would have thought they had been overtaken by such a misfortune. Moreover, by common consent, and Glenarvan's advice, they had decided to affect a profound indifference before the natives. It was the only means of making an impression on these savage natures.

From some words the Maoris used, Glenarvan realised that English was familiar to them, so he decided to question the chief concerning the fate in store for his party. Addressing Kai-Koumou, he said, in a voice devoid of all fear—

‘Where are you taking us, chief?’

Kai-Koumou looked at him coldly without replying.

‘What do you mean to do with us?’ Glenarvan persisted.

Kai-Koumou darted a lightning glance at him, then, in a grave voice, he answered: ‘Exchange you, if your people are willing; if they refuse, kill you!’

Glenarvan questioned him no further, but hope was restored. No doubt some chiefs of the Maori army had fallen into the hands of the English, and the savage meant to try and get them back by an exchange. So there was a chance for them, and their situation was not altogether desperate.

The Waikato is the national river of New Zealand, and the Maoris are as proud of it as the Germans are of the Rhine. In its course of 200 miles it waters the most beautiful parts of the island, from Wellington to Auckland. It has given its name to all those tribes who, indomitable and untamed, rose in a body against the invaders.

Paganel knew the veneration the natives held for this great New Zealand artery and he realised that no English or German naturalists had gone beyond its junction with the Waipa. Where could Kai-Koumou be taking his captives? He could not have

guessed if the word 'Taupo,' often repeated by the chief and his warriors, had not aroused his attention.

He consulted his map, and saw that Taupo was the name of a lake celebrated in geographical annals, in the most mountainous part of the island, at the southern end of Auckland province. The Waikato flows from this lake, after traversing its whole length.

Paganel, speaking in French to John Mangles, so that the savages could not understand him, asked him to estimate the speed of the canoe. John thought they were going about five miles an hour.

'Then,' said the geographer, 'if we halt for the night, it will take about four days to reach the lake.'

'But where are the English headquarters?' asked Glenarvan.

'That's difficult to find out,' Paganel answered. 'The war has certainly been carried into Taranaki, and, in all probability, the troops are gathered beside the lake.'

'May God watch over us!' Lady Glenarvan said imploringly.

Glenarvan looked sadly at his young wife and Mary Grant, exposed to the mercy of these ferocious savages, and carried away into a wild country, far from all human intervention. But he saw that Kai-Koumou was watching him and, prudently, unwilling for the chief to guess that one of the captives was his wife, he resumed his air of indifference.

After they had gone about ten miles, they came to a village on the left bank of the river, named on Paganel's map Kiri-Kiroa. Kai-Koumou did not stop, but he had some of their own food, carried away when they were made prisoners, given to the captives. He and his warriors, and the slaves, contented themselves with fern roots and potatoes, abundantly cultivated in the two islands. No animal matter figured in their repast, and the dried meat of the captives did not seem to excite their appetite.

About three, the Pokaroa Ranges appeared on the right bank of the river. On some of the highest points were to be seen some old fortifications, called by the natives *pahs*, in ruins. They were built in the most impregnable positions, like eagles' nests.

The sun was just disappearing below the horizon when the canoe struck against a bank covered with stones which the Waikato had brought down in its course from volcanic mountains. Some trees suggested a pleasant place for camping. Kai-Koumou

gave orders for his prisoners to be put on shore; the men had their hands tied, the women were left free. They were all placed in the centre of the camp, around which the blazing fires made an impenetrable barrier.

Next morning their journey began again, and they sped along the river which comes winding from the plains on the right, to meet the Waikato.

There a canoe, manned by ten natives, joined them. The newcomers had recently been fighting against the English troops, as might be seen by their torn garments, their red weapons, and their bleeding wounds. They were grave and taciturn and, with the indifference natural to savage tribes, they paid no attention to the Europeans.

At noon the outlines of the summits of Maungatotari were to be seen in the west. There the valley of the Waikato began to narrow, and the river, closely shut in, foamed and roared with the violence of a torrent; but the vigour of the natives, increased and regulated by a song, in rhythm with the dashing of waves, carried them safely over the foaming waters. Below the rapids, the Waikato again became calm.

Towards evening Kai-Koumou stopped at the foot of some mountains. There twenty of the natives landed and made preparations for the night, and fires were soon blazing under the trees. A chief, of equal rank, advanced so many steps, and by rubbing his nose against that of Kai-Koumou, gave him the cordial salutation of the *chongui*. The prisoners were deposited in the centre of the camp, and guarded with extreme vigilance.

Next morning their long journey up the river was resumed, and other boats came down the small tributaries of the river. About sixty warriors, evidently fugitives from the last insurrection, and some more or less injured by English bullets, were on their way back to the mountainous districts. Sometimes a song arose from the canoes as they rowed in line, a native intoning the patriotic ode of the mysterious *Pihe*—

‘*Papa ra ti wati tidi*

I douna nei—’

the national hymn which urges the Maoris to the war of independence. The voice of the singer, full and sonorous, awoke the echoes of the mountains; and after each couplet the natives struck

their breasts, which resounded like drums, and took up the chorus of the warlike song.

Something surprising happened that day as they passed along the river. Towards four, the canoe, guided by the firm hand of the chief, shot towards a narrow valley, where the water boiled and eddied round the numerous islets. To capsize would have been fatal, for to step on the boiling mud of the banks was certain death. Indeed, this river, rising from hot springs, has at all times aroused the curiosity of travellers.

Oxide of iron coloured with a brilliant red the clay on the banks, where not a foot of solid turf was to be seen, and the atmosphere was saturated with a penetrating sulphurous odour. The natives did not suffer from this at all, but the captives were seriously inconvenienced by the vapour given forth from the fissures in the ground, and from the bubbles which burst under the pressure of the internal gas. But if these were inconvenient, the eye could not but admire the impressive spectacle.

The canoes were pushing on through a thick cloud of white vapour, whose sparkling columns met in a dome above the river. Upon its banks were a hundred geysers, some of them throwing forth masses of vapour, others discharging themselves in liquid columns, and varying their effects like the jets and cascades of a fountain contrived by the hand of man. The water and the vapour intermingled in the air and took all the colours of the rainbow in the rays of the sun.

Here the Waikato flows over a bed which incessantly boils under the action of the subterranean fires, and not far from Lake Rotorna in the east roar the thermal springs and foaming cascades of Rotomahana and Tatarata. This region is pierced with geysers and craters, from which is emitted the gas which cannot escape by the insufficient outlets of Tongariro and Wakari, the only active volcanoes in New Zealand. For two miles the canoes passed through this cloud of warm vapour, which was swirling upon the surface of the water; then the sulphurous smoke disappeared, and pure air soon refreshed the half-suffocated travellers.

This region of the springs was passed, and before the end of the day the vigorous strokes of the natives carried them past two more rapids, those of Hinanatua and of Tamatea. That evening

they camped one hundred miles above the confluence of the Waipa and Waikato; here the river wound round towards the east, and then fell south into Lake Taupo.

On consulting his map, Jacques Paganel recognised on the right bank Taubara, a mountain 3,000 feet high.

At noon next day the boats passed into Lake Taupo, and the natives saluted with passionate gestures a strip of material floating in the wind at the top of a hut. It was the national flag.

CHAPTER X

THE PAH

ON LEAVING the Waikato, Kai-Koumou crossed the little creek where the waters of the river rush in to join the lake, doubled a sharp promontory, and touched upon the eastern shore, at the foot of the first slopes of Manga Mountain. Before them stretched away fields of *phormium*, the precious flax of New Zealand. Nothing goes to waste in this useful plant: its flower provides an excellent honey; its stalk produces a gummy substance, as useful as wax or starch. Its foliage, still more accommodating, undergoes numerous transformations; fresh gathered, it serves for paper; dried, it makes an excellent tinder; cut up, it is twisted into rope and thread; of the thread they make coverings, cloaks, or mats; and, tinted red or black, it clothes the most fashionable Maoris.

This valuable plant is found everywhere in the two islands along the sea-shore, the banks of the rivers, and the shores of the lakes. Here its wild bushes covered entire fields; its reddish brown flowers, like agave blossoms, stand out from its cluster of long, sharp leaves. The most beautiful humming birds live in these fields of *phormium*, and fly from flower to flower, drinking their honeyed treasures.

In the waters of the lake dabbled flocks of ducks, with blackish plumage, striped with grey and green. A quarter of a mile off, upon one of the steepest sides of the mountain, appeared a *pah*, or Maori entrenchment, placed in an impregnable position. The

prisoners were landed one by one, carefully guarded by the warriors. The path which led to the entrenchment crossed the fields of phormium and a thicket of trees.

After a tolerably long walk the prisoners arrived inside the pah. This fortress was guarded, first by a row of solid palisades, fifteen feet high, then by a second row of stakes, and lastly by a wall of twisted osiers, with loopholes here and there. The centre was a plateau, from which arose about forty Maori huts symmetrically disposed.

The captives were horribly startled at seeing the stakes of the second enclosure ornamented with heads, and Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant turned away as much with disgust as with fear. These heads had belonged to hostile chiefs, killed in battle, whose bodies had been eaten by their conquerors; the geographer knew this by their cavernous, eyeless sockets.

The eyes of such chiefs are eaten; the head is prepared after the native custom, the brain taken out, the skin stripped off, the nose kept in its place by small strips of wood, the nostrils stuffed with phormium, the mouth and eyelids sewn up; the head is then put in an oven, and smoked for thirty hours. Thus preserved, it lasts for a long time, without alteration or wrinkle, and is kept as a trophy of victory.

The Maoris very often preserve the heads of their own chiefs, but then the eye is left in its socket. The New Zealanders display these remains with pride to arouse the admiration of the young warriors, and pay them a tribute of veneration by the most solemn ceremonies. But in Kai-Koumou's pah the heads of enemies alone ornamented this horrible museum; and no doubt more than one English head, with eyeless sockets, swelled the collection of the Maori chief.

Kai-Koumou's hut, amongst several others of less importance, was situated at the end of the pah, in front of a wide uncovered space, which Europeans would have called the parade-ground. The hut was built of stakes, interlaced with branches, and carpeted with phormium mats: it was twenty feet long, fifteen wide, and ten high. An opening gave access to it, and a curtain formed of a thick vegetable tissue served as a door. The roof projected beyond the walls. Some carved figures at the end of the beams ornamented the hut, and the *wharepuni*, or doorway, offered to

the visitors' admiration many symbolical figures, the work of native artists.

Inside the hut the flooring was formed of beaten earth, raised a few inches above the ground. Some screens made of reeds, and mattresses made of dried ferns, covered with a mat woven from the long and flexible leaves of the *typha*, served as beds. In the midst, a hole, paved with stone, constituted a hearth, and in the roof a second hole did duty as a chimney. When the smoke got thick, it escaped at last by that outlet, but not till it had deposited on the walls of the habitation a coat of thick black varnish.

Beside the hut were storehouses for the chief's food, his phormium, batatas, and edible ferns, as well as the ovens in which to cook the food. Farther on, in small enclosures, were pigs and goats, rare descendants of the useful animals acclimatised by Captain Cook. Dogs ran about in search of their meagre nourishment, and were lean for animals who served as the Maoris' daily food.

Glenarvan and his companions took in this scene at a glance. Near an empty hut they had to wait the chief's good pleasure, though, meanwhile they were exposed to the insults of a group of old women. These harpies surrounded them, and shook their fists at them, howling and vociferating, and a few English words from the thick lips of these crones showed clearly that they were demanding immediate vengeance. In the midst of these threats Lady Glenarvan affected a calmness which she could not really feel; she controlled herself by the most heroic efforts, so as not to add to her husband's grief. Poor Mary Grant felt faint, and was kept from falling by John Mangles, who was ready to let himself be killed in her defence. His companions bore this deluge of invectives variously, being either indifferent to it like the major, or a prey to increasing irritation like Paganel.

Anxious to spare his wife the assault of these old hags, Glenarvan walked up to Kai-Koumou and, pointing to the hideous group, said: 'Send them away.'

The Maori chief looked fixedly at his prisoner without answering; then by a gesture he silenced the howling band. Glenarvan bent his head in sign of thanks and came slowly back to his place amongst his friends.

At the moment about a hundred New Zealanders were assembled in the pah—old men, middle-aged men, and young men—awaiting Kai-Koumou's orders. Some were calm but gloomy, others gave themselves up to the expression of violent grief, weeping for the relatives and friends who had fallen in the last combats.

Of all the chiefs who had risen at the voice of William Thompson, Kai-Koumou alone had returned to the lake districts, and was the first to tell his tribe of the defeat of the national insurrection, between in the plains of the lower Waikato. Of the hundred warriors who had gone out to defend the soil, only fifty had returned. Some were now prisoners of the invaders, but many were sleeping their last sleep on the battle-field.

This explained the profound grief of the tribe on the Kai-Koumou's arrival. Nothing had previously transpired of this latest defeat, and the fatal news had only just reached them.

Amongst savages, moral grief always shows itself by physical demonstrations; the relatives and friends of the dead warriors, the women especially, tore their faces and shoulders with sharp shells, so that blood mingled with their tears; the deepest incisions were signs of the greatest grief, and the unfortunate women, bleeding and frantic, were horrible to see.

Another circumstance, very grave in the eyes of the natives, increased their despair. Not only was the relative or friend they wept for no more, but his bones could not repose in the family tomb. Now to possess these remains is looked upon in Maori religion as indispensable to the future state; not the perishable flesh, but the bones—which are carefully gathered together, cleaned and polished—are deposited in the *eudoupa*, 'the house of glory.' These tombs are ornamented with wooden figures, on which the tattooing of the deceased is reproduced with perfect fidelity. But now these tombs were empty, and the bones, gnawed by the wild dogs, were bleaching without burial on the battle-field.

The cries of grief redoubled. The threats of the women against the Europeans were followed by the imprecations of the men. Their gestures became more violent, and acts of brutality seemed imminent.

Kai-Koumou, fearing an outbreak from the fanatics, had his

captives taken to a sacred hut, at the other end of the pah, upon an abrupt plateau. This hut rested against a rock which rose a hundred feet above it and ended in a steep slope, the side of the entrenchment. In this *Ware-Atoua*, or sacred house, the priests taught the New Zealanders of a god in three persons, the father, the son, and the bird or spirit, and there was kept the holy food which Maou-Ranga-Rangui eats through his priests.

The captives, temporarily sheltered against the natives' fury stretched themselves out upon the mats of phormium. Lady Glenarvan, her strength exhausted, her moral energy overcome, threw herself into her husband's arms. Glenarvan did his best to reassure her, saying—'Courage, Helena: God will never forsake us!'

Robert climbed up on Wilson's shoulders, and managed to look through a gap between the roof and the walls. Thence he could see all over the pah as far as Kai-Koumou's hut.

'They're assembled round the chief,' he said in low tones. 'They're waving their arms and howling. Kai-Koumou is trying to speak to them!' The boy was silent for a few minutes, and then continued—'Kai-Koumou is speaking. The savages are calmer. They're listening to him.'

'The chief has evidently a personal interest in protecting us,' said the major. 'He's anxious to exchange his prisoners for the chiefs of his tribe. But will his warriors consent?'

'Yes! They're listening to him,' said Robert. 'They're scattering. Some of them are going into their huts. Others are leaving the entrenchment.'

'Is that true?' cried the major.

'Yes,' replied Robert. 'Kai-Koumou has been left alone with the warriors who came with him in the canoe. Ah! one of them is coming towards us.'

'Come down, Robert,' Glenarvan told him.

Then Lady Glenarvan rose, and seized her husband's arm.

'Edward,' she said, in a firm voice, 'neither Mary Grant nor I must fall alive into the hands of these savages!'

As she spoke, she put a loaded revolver into Glenarvan's hands.

'A weapon!' cried Glenarvan.

'Yes! The Maoris didn't search their prisoners. But this weapon is not for them, Edward; it is for us!'

As the mat which closed the doorway of the hut was raised, and a native appeared, Glenarvan hid the revolver under his coat. The newcomer signed to the prisoners to follow him. Glenarvan and his party, keeping close together, crossed the pah, and stopped in front of Kai-Koumou. The leading warriors of the tribe stood around the chief, and among them was to be seen that Maori leader whose canoe had joined Kai-Koumou's boat at the confluence of the two rivers.

This was a man of about forty, vigorous, and of fierce and cruel appearance; he was named Kara-Tete, 'The Irascible'. Kai-Koumou treated him with respect, and from the fineness of his tattooing it was clear that Kara-Tete held a high rank in his tribe. But a close observer would have guessed that there was rivalry between these two chiefs, and the major saw that the other's influence did not please Kai-Koumou. They both commanded important tribes, with an equal power, and although, during this short interview, Kai-Koumou smiled, his eyes showed great enmity.

Kai-Koumou questioned Glenarvan: 'You're English?'

'Yes,' answered Glenarvan without hesitation, for their nationality would make an exchange more easy.

'And your companions?' asked the chief.

'My companions are also English. We are shipwrecked travellers. And if you want to know we have taken no part in the war.'

'No matter!' replied Kara-Tete, in brutal tones. 'All English people are our enemies. Your countrymen have invaded our island! They have laid waste our lands and burnt our villages!'

'They were wrong!' Glenarvan replied gravely. 'I say this because I think it, and not because I am in your power.'

'Listen,' said Kai-Koumou; 'Tohonga, the high priest of Noui-Atoua (one of the New Zealand gods), has fallen into the hands of your people; he is a prisoner of the *pakehas* (Europeans). Our god commands us to redeem his life. I would rather tear out your heart; I would rather that your head and those of your companions were stuck upon the stakes of this palisade! But Noui-Atoua has spoken.'

'Kai-Koumou, up to this time master of himself, trembled with anger, and his face wore a look of fierce exultation.

Then, after a few moments, he coldly asked: 'Do you think the English will give us back our Tohonga in exchange for you?'

Glenarvan hesitated, and looked at the chief.

'I don't know,' he said, after a moment's silence.

'Speak,' said Kai-Koumou. 'Is your life worth that of our Tohonga?'

'No' replied Glenarvan. 'I am neither a chief nor a priest among my people!'

Paganel looked at Glenarvan with the deepest astonishment.

Kai-Koumou seemed equally surprised. 'So you are not sure of it?' he asked.

'I don't know,' replied Glenarvan.

'Your people will not accept you in exchange for Tohonga?'

'They may accept all of us, but not me alone,' said Glenarvan.

'With the Maoris,' declared Kai-Koumou, 'it is head for head.'

'Offer these ladies first of all in exchange for your priest,' said Glenarvan, pointing to Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant. 'These two ladies,' he bowed to them respectfully, 'occupy a high rank in our country.'

The chief looked coldly at his prisoner. An evil smile passed over his face; but he quickly answered in a tone of suppressed anger, 'Do you think to deceive Kai-Koumou by your false words? Do you think that Kai-Koumou's eyes don't know how to read hearts?'

And pointing to Lady Glenarvan—'There is your wife!' he said.

'No! Mine!' cried Kara-Tete.

Then pushing the prisoners aside, the chief laid his hand on the shoulder of Lady Glenarvan, who grew pale at his touch.

Without uttering a word, Glenarvan raised his arm. A shot was heard, and Kara-Tete fell lifeless to the ground.

At the sound of fire-arms a crowd of natives flocked from their huts; the pah was filled in an instant, a hundred arms were extended towards the unfortunate captives, and Glenarvan's revolver was snatched from him. Kai-Koumou gave him a strange

look; then motioning back the crowd that pressed upon the prisoners, he cried, ' *Taboo! taboo!* '

At this word the crowd stopped before Glenarvan and his companions, who were momentarily preserved by a supernatural power.

They were then taken back to the Ware-Atoua, which served as a prison. But Robert Grant and the geographer were no longer with them.

CHAPTER XI

THE FUNERAL OF A MAORI CHIEF

ACCORDING TO a New Zealand custom, Kai-Koumou added the title of ' *Ariki* ' to that of chief of his tribe. He was clothed with the dignity of a priest, and as such he could extend to persons or things the superstitious protection of the taboo.

The taboo is inflicted by chiefs for political purposes, or for some private reason. A native is tabooed for several days under many circumstances; when he has cut his hair, when he has undergone the operation of tattooing, when he has built himself a canoe or a house, when he is mortally sick, when he is dead, and so forth. If unforeseen circumstances threaten to empty the rivers of their fish, to ruin the batatas plantations, these are protected by the taboo. If a chief wishes to keep importunate people from his house, he taboos it; if he wishes to monopolise for his own profit any dealings with a foreign ship, he taboos that; and if he is dissatisfied with a European trader, he always taboos him. His interdict then resembles the ancient royal veto.

When an object is taboo no one can touch it with impunity. If a native is under this interdict, certain articles of food are temporarily forbidden him. If he is allowed to relax this severe diet, and is rich, his slaves assist him, and put the food in his mouth, which he must not touch with his hands; if he is poor, he has to pick up the food with his mouth, and the taboo converts him into an animal.

In fact, this strange custom indeed directs and modifies the slightest action of the New Zealanders. It is the incessant intervention of the Divinity in social life. It has the force of law, and the whole native code is included in the taboo. It was arbitrary taboo which had just preserved the prisoners from the fury of the tribe; some of the natives, friends and partisans of Kai-Koumou, on hearing his words had suddenly stopped and even protected the captives.

Glenarvan knew the destiny that awaited him; his death alone could atone for the murder of a chief, and death amongst these savage people always follows some long agony. He, therefore, expected to cruelly expiate this legitimate indignation, but he hoped that Kai-Koumou's anger would fall only upon himself.

What a night he and his companions passed! Who could depict their anguish, and measure their suffering? Poor Robert, brave Paganel, had not reappeared, and there could be no doubt about their fate. Were they not the first victims sacrificed to the vengeance of the natives? All hope had gone and even MacNabbs despaired; there was no chance of an escape, for the warriors, armed to the teeth, watched at the door of their hut.

The morning of 13th February came. No communication had taken place between the natives and the prisoners, still protected by the taboo. There was a little food in the hut, but the unfortunates scarcely touched it, for hunger disappears before grief. The day passed without bringing any chance or any hope: no doubt the chief's funeral and their death would take place at the same time.

Although Glenarvan did not hide from himself that Kai-Koumou must have given up all idea of exchange, the major still kept the shadow of a hope.

'Who knows,' he reminded Glenarvan of the effect on the chief by Kara-Tete's death, 'if Kai-Koumou is not secretly grateful to you?'

But Glenarvan would not allow himself to hope, though the next day passed without anything else happening.

The Maoris believe that, during three days after death, the soul inhabits the body of the deceased, and so the corpse remains without burial until the three days have passed. The natives faithfully observed this custom, and the pah was deserted till 15th

February. John Mangles, mounted on Wilson's shoulders, kept a watch on the outside entrenchments. Not a native was to be seen except the sentinels, who were guarding the door of the Ware-Atoua.

But on the third day the huts were opened; the savages—men, women and children—numbering several hundred in all, assembled in the pah, silent and calm.

Kai-Koumou, surrounded by the principal chiefs of his tribe, placed himself upon a mound in the centre of the entrenchment. The crowd of natives formed a half-circle a few yards behind, and the whole assemblage kept an absolute silence. On a sign from Kai-Koumou a warrior went towards the Ward-Atoua.

'Remember!' Lady Glenarvan whispered to her husband and at the same time Mary Grant approached John Mangles.

'Lord and Lady Glenarvan think,' she told him 'that a wife may die by her husband's hand to escape a shameful existence. I think that a woman may also die by the hand of her lover to escape such a fate. John, in this moment of agony, it is useless to conceal that we love one another. May I count upon you as Lady Glenarvan counts upon her husband?'

'Mary!' cried the young captain; but before he could say more, the mat was raised, and the captives were led forth to Kai-Koumou. The two women were resigned to their fate, and the men dissembled their anguish under a calm which denoted a superhuman energy.

'You killed Kara-Tete?' Kai-Koumou asked Glenarvan.

'I did,' he answered.

'Tomorrow, at sunrise, you must die!'

'Alone?' asked Glenarvan.

'Ah! As if the life of our Tohonga was not more precious than yours!' Kai-Koumou's eyes sparkled fiercely.

At this moment there was a disturbance amongst the natives. Glenarvan glanced round. The crowd opened, and a warrior appeared, covered with dust and sweat, and ready to fall with fatigue.

As soon as Kai-Koumou saw him he spoke to him in English, plainly meaning to be understood by the captives.

'You come from the Pakehas' camp?'

'Yes,' answered the Maori.

. ' You saw the prisoner, our Tohonga? '

' Yes.'

' Is he still alive? '

' He is dead! The English have shot him! '

All was over for Glenarvan and his companions.

' You must all die tomorrow,' Kai-Koumou told them, ' at sunrise.'

The captives were not taken back to the Ware-Atoua. They were to be present during the day at the chief's funeral, with all its accompanying horrors. A troop of natives led them to the foot of an enormous tree, where their guardians watched them closely. The rest of the Maori tribe, absorbed in grief, appeared to have forgotten them.

The ceremony began. The corpse was placed upon a little mound in the centre of the entrenchment: it was clothed in a sumptuous costume, and wrapped up in a magnificent mat of phormium. The head was ornamented with feathers, and bore a crown of green leaves. The face, arms, and breast, having been rubbed with oil, showed no sign of corruption.

The relatives and friends of the deceased came to the foot of the mound, and all at once, just as if the conductor of an orchestra had given the signal to begin a funeral chant, a loud concert of tears, cries, and groans rose in the air. They wept for the deceased in a rhythmical and sombre song: his near relatives struck their heads; the women tore their faces with their nails, more prodigal of their blood than of their tears.

These unfortunate women conscientiously performed their savage duty. But these demonstrations were not enough to appease the soul of the deceased, whose anger would, no doubt, have fallen upon the survivors of his tribe; and his warriors, not being able to recall him to life, wished, at least, that he should not regret in the other world the comforts he had enjoyed in this. The unfortunate wife of Kara-Tete must not abandon her husband in the tomb: such was the custom, and examples of such sacrifices are not lacking in the country's history.

This woman appeared; she was still young; her hair flowed in disorder over her shoulders. Her sobs and cries rose towards the heavens, vague words, regrets, and interrupted phrases, in which she celebrated the virtues of the deceased, broken with sobs; and.

in a supreme paroxysm of grief, she threw herself upon the ground, striking the earth with her head.

At this moment Kai-Koumou approached her. Suddenly the unfortunate victim arose; but a violent blow from the *mere*, a heavy club which Kai-Koumou carried, struck her to the ground.

Frightful cries then resounded, and a hundred arms menaced the captives, who were terrified at this horrible spectacle. But no one moved, as the funeral ceremony was not finished.

The wife of Kara-Tete was dead, and the two corpses were laid out beside one another. But the company of his wife in the eternal life would not be enough for the deceased. Who would wait upon them both when they were with Noui-Atoua, if their slaves did not follow them from this world to the next?

Six wretches were led to the corpses of their masters. These were the slaves that the pitiless laws of war had reduced to servitude. During the life of the chief, they had suffered the greatest privations and the most cruel treatment—half starved and used like beasts of burden—and now, in accordance with the Maori religion, they were to resume this life of slavery in eternity, poor creatures.

These wretches seemed quite resigned to their fate, nor could they be surprised at a long foreseen mode of death. Clearly they had no notion of defending themselves, for their hands were left free. Their death was to be rapid, and long suffering would be spared them. Tortures were kept for the authors of the murder, who, standing about twenty yards off, turned away their eyes from this frightful spectacle, the horror of which continually increased. Six strokes of the club, wielded by the hands of six vigorous warriors, stretched the victims upon the ground in a sea of blood, and this was the signal for a frightful scene of cannibalism.

The bodies of the slaves were not protected by the taboo, like that of their master; they belonged to the tribe. The sacrifice completed, the whole mass of natives, chiefs, warriors, old men, women, and children, without distinction of age or sex, and all seized with a bestial fury, threw themselves upon the lifeless remains of the victims. In less time than it takes to tell, the smoking bodies were torn to pieces, divided, dismembered, cut not only into morsels, but into crumbs. Of the two hundred Maoris present at the sacrifice, each had a share of the human flesh; they

disputed and fought over the least scrap, and drops of hot blood bespattered these horrible creatures: it was the delirium and the rage of tigers, infuriated over their prey. Twenty fires were then lit in different parts of the pah; the odour of burnt flesh infected the air; and if it had not been for the frightful tumult of this feast, and the cries which still issued from throats gorged with flesh, the captives would have heard the bones of the victims cracking under the teeth of the cannibals.

Glenarvan and his companions, aghast with terror and disgust, tried to hide this abominable scene from the eyes of the two poor women. They then realised what fate awaited them on the morrow at sunrise, and by what tortures such a death would, no doubt, be preceded. They were dumb with horror.

Then the funeral dances began. Strong liquors, extracted from the *piper excelsum*, the spirit of the pimento, increased the natives' intoxication until there was nothing human left in them. Perhaps even forgetful of the chief's taboo, they might throw themselves, in a last excess, upon the unfortunate prisoners?

But Kai-Koumou had kept his reason in the midst of the general madness. He gave an hour for this orgie of blood, so that it might reach all its intensity and then die away; and then the last act of the funeral was carried out with the customary ceremonies.

The bodies of Kara-Tete and his wife were raised, their limbs bent up against their breasts, after the New Zealand custom. Then they were to be buried until the flesh should disappear, and nothing be left in the earth but the bones.

The place of burial had been chosen outside the entrenchment, about two miles off, at the summit of a little mountain named Mannganamu, situated on the right bank of the lake. Two primitive-looking palanquins, or rather litters, were carried to the foot of the mound: the corpses, sitting rather than lying, were placed upon them. Four warriors raised them on their shoulders, and the whole tribe, again taking up their funeral hymn, followed in procession to the place of interment.

The captives, still carefully guarded, watched the cortège as it left the inner enclosure of the pah. There the songs and cries died away in the distance, and for about half an hour the funeral procession was lost to sight in the valley. Then it reappeared, wind-

ing along the mountain paths. How fantastic, in the distance, looked the undulating movements of that long sinuous column!

The procession halted at the top of Mannganamu, which is 800 feet high, and here the tomb of Kar-Tete was prepared.

A common Maori would have had nothing but a hole and a heap of stones for his grave, but a powerful chief, destined to be deified, had to have a tomb worthy of his exploits.

The eudoupa had been surrounded by palisades; and stakes, ornamented with figures in red ochre, were stuck up in the ground near the graves where the bodies were to repose. The relations had not forgotten that the *waidoua*, or spirit of the dead, feeds on material substances, as the body does during this perishable life. That is why food had been placed in the enclosure, along with the arms and garments of the deceased; and nothing was wanting to make the tomb comfortable. Husband and wife were placed side by side within it, and, after a new series of lamentations, were covered with earth and herbs.

Then the procession silently descended the side of the mountain; and now no one could climb the Mannganamu under pain of death, for it was tabooed like the Tongariro, on which reposed the remains of a chief crushed by an earthquake in 1846.

CHAPTER XII

THE LAST HOURS

AS THE sun was disappearing beyond Lake Taupo, behind the Tuhahua and Puketapu Mountains, the captives were led back into their prison. They were not to leave it again until the summits of the Wahita Ranges should be illuminated by the first rays of dawn. There still remained one night to prepare for death. Notwithstanding the overwhelming horror of their situation, they shared a last meal together.

'We shall need all our strength,' Glenarvan reminded them, 'to look death in the face; we must show these barbarians that Europeans know how to die!'

When their meal was finished, Lady Glenarvan said a prayer

in which the others joined. Then the two ladies lay down in a corner of the hut, and, worn out with fatigue and distress, were soon asleep.

Then Glenarvan took his companions aside, and said: 'My friends, our lives, and those of these unfortunate women, are in the hands of God! If it is His will that we die tomorrow, we shall know how to meet our fate bravely, and like Christians; but it is not death alone we have to fear, but infamy and torture, and these two women—'

Here Glenarvan was silent from emotion. Then, after a moment's silence: 'John,' he turned to the young captain, 'you promised Mary what I promised Lady Glenarvan. Are you determined to fulfil it?'

'Yes,' John Mangles assured him.

'But we haven't got a weapon?'

'Here's one,' John showed him a dagger. 'I snatched it from the hands of Kara-Tete when he fell dead at your feet. My lord, whichever of us survives must carry out the wishes of Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant.'

After these words a deep silence reigned in the hut. The major at last broke it, saying: 'My friends, we must not resort to extreme measures until the last moment.'

'I'm not speaking for ourselves,' said Glenarvan. 'If we were alone, twenty times already I should have cried, "Friends, let's fight for our lives! Let's attack these wretches!" But the women—the women!'

John lifted the mat hanging over the doorway, and counted twenty-five natives, who were watching at the door of the Ware-Atoua. A large fire had been lighted, and it threw dark shadows upon the inequalities of the pah. Some of the savages were stretched on the ground around the brazier; others were standing motionless, and their forms loomed dark against the bright flames, but all kept an eye on the hut entrusted to their care. It was built against a rock which bounded the entrenchment, and it was accessible only by a narrow neck of land, which joined it in front with the plateau of the pah. Its other two sides rose above a precipice a hundred feet deep; to descend was impossible. The neck of land which joined the hut with the pah was guarded by the Maoris like a drawbridge. Escape was impossible, and Glen-

arvan, after sounding the walls of his prison for the twentieth time, had to acknowledge it.

The hours of this night of anguish were passing away. Thick darkness covered the mountain, and neither moon nor stars were to be seen. As some gusts of wind made the natives' fire blaze up momentarily the flames lit the hut, and showed the wretched prisoners; they were still wrapped in thought, and the silence of death reigned amongst them.

It must have been about four in the morning when the major's attention was aroused by a slight noise, which seemed to come from behind the back of the hut. He at first disregarded it, but, finding that the noise continued, he listened with his ear to the ground. He fancied he could hear somebody scratching or digging outside.

When he had made certain of this, he went softly towards Glenarvan and John Mangles, roused them from their sad thoughts, and took them to the back of the hut.

'Listen,' he said, in a low voice, gesturing for silence.

The scratching sound was more and more perceptible; they could hear the stones grating against the pressure of some sharp instrument, and then rolling down.

'Some animal in its den,' suggested John Mangles. 'Who knows, perhaps it's a man?'

'Man or animal,' replied the major, 'I know what we'd better do.'

They set to work to make a hole from their side of the hut: John with his dagger and the others with stones torn up from the earth or with their nails. Mulrady, stretched out on the ground, was meantime watching the group of savages through a hole in the matting.

The savages, grouped motionless around the brazier, never suspected what was going on twenty paces from them. The soil was so soft and friable that, notwithstanding the want of proper tools, the work advanced rapidly. Soon it became clear that some man, or men, was making an opening from the outside into the hut. What could be his, or their, purpose? Did they know about the prisoners?

The captives redoubled their efforts. Their fingers were torn and bleeding, but that did not deter them. After half an hour's work

they had bored a hole about a yard deep, and they could tell from the sound that they would soon be in touch with those who were working from the outside.

Some minutes passed, and suddenly the major drew back his hand; it had been cut by a sharp knife, but he managed to stifle an exclamation. John Mangles pushed the knife aside with his dagger and seized the hand which held it.

It was the hand either of a woman or of a child, and that of a European! Not a word had been spoken, and it was clear that on both sides there was a wish to keep silence.

'Is it Robert?' Glenarvan whispered.

But softly as he uttered the name, Mary, who had been aroused by their movements, could hear it. She crept up to the opening, seized the dirt-covered hand and kissed it passionately.

'It's you!' she exclaimed—nor could she be mistaken; 'it's you, Robert!'

'Yes, sister,' answered Robert, 'I'm here to save you all! But silence!'

'Brave boy!' murmured Glenarvan.

'Look out and see what the savages are doing,' Robert advised them.

Mulrady, whose attention had been diverted by his arrival went back to his observation post.

'All goes well,' he said. 'There are only four of them watching; the rest are asleep.'

'Splendid!' replied Wilson.

The hole was now large enough for Robert to crawl through into his sister's arms. Round his body was rolled a long phormium rope.

'Oh, my boy,' Lady Glenarvan asked him, 'how did you get away from the savages?'

'I managed to escape during the disturbance,' Robert explained. 'For two days I hid myself behind some bushes; I wandered about all night in the hope of seeing you. While the tribe was busied with the chief's funeral I reconnoitred the side of the entrenchment where your prison is, and I saw that I might be able to reach you. From a deserted hut I stole this knife and rope. The tufts of grass and branches of shrubs served as a ladder: I chanced to find a sort of cave hollowed out of the rock

underneath this hut. I had only a few feet of soft earth to dig through and here I am! Now let's get away,' he added in decided tones.

'Is Paganel down there?' asked Glenarvan.

'No, my lord,' the boy replied. 'How could he be there?'

'Didn't he escape with you, then?' asked Glenarvan.

'No,' Robert was astonished to hear of the disappearance of his friend Paganel.

'Come, let's be off,' said the major. 'There's not a moment to be lost. Wherever Paganel may be, he cannot be worse off than we are here.'

Indeed the moments were precious. The captives passed one by one through the narrow opening, and found themselves in the cave. Before leaving the hut Mangles cleared away all the rubbish, and in his turn he went through the opening, over which he let fall some of the matting which lined the hut, so that it was completely hidden.

The next thing was to descend the perpendicular side of the rock as far as the ledge, and without the phromium rope that Robert had brought this would have been impracticable. It was unrolled and fastened to a point of the rock, but before John Mangles would let his friends trust themselves to it he tried it, for he knew that a fall would be fatal.

'This rope,' he said, 'can't bear the weight of more than two people; so let Lord and Lady Glenarvan go down first, and when they've reached the slope three pulls at the cord will be the signal for us to follow.'

'I'll go first,' Robert insisted 'for I found at the bottom of the slope a deep sort of excavation, where those who go down first can hide while waiting for the others.'

'Go on then, my boy,' Glenarvan agreed.

Robert disappeared. A minute later three pulls at the rope assured them of his safe descent.

Then Glenarvan and Lady Glenarvan ventured outside the cave. The darkness was still profound, but some streaks of grey were already touching the mountains in the east.

The sharp cold of the morning air revived the unfortunate young woman; feeling herself stronger, she began the perilous descent.

Glenarvan, and then his wife, slid down the rope to the place where the perpendicular rock met the top of the slope. Then Glenarvan, preceding his wife and supporting her, began to descend backwards. He felt for tufts of grass and shrubs strong enough to give them support; he first tried them, and then placed Lady Glenarvan's feet on them. Some birds, suddenly disturbed, flew away uttering shrill cries, and the fugitives trembled when a little stone, loosened from its hold, rolled noisily to the bottom of the mountain. They had gone half down the slope when a voice was heard at the opening of the cave.

'Stop!' whispered John Mangles.

Glenarvan, hanging on with one hand to the tuft of grass and with the other upholding his wife, waited, hardly daring to breathe.

Wilson had been on the look-out. Having heard some noise outside the Ware-Atoua, he had gone back into the hut, and was watching the Maoris. On a sign from him, John had stopped Glenarvan.

One of the warriors, disturbed by some slight sound, had risen and approached the Ware-Atoua. He stood with his head bent, listening two paces away from the hut. He remained in this attitude for a minute, which seemed to the prisoners as long as an hour. Then shaking his head as if mistaken, he returned to his companions, took up an armful of dry wood and threw it into the brazier, where the fire was half burnt out; then, after having looked at the first streaks of dawn which whitened the horizon, he lay down again close to the fire.

'All goes well,' Wilson decided.

John made a sign for the descent to continue.

Glenarvan let himself slide gently down the slope, and soon he and Lady Glenarvan were standing safely on the narrow path where Robert was waiting for them.

Next came John Mangles and Mary Grant. They too sheltered in the hiding-place which Robert had pointed out.

Five minutes later all the fugitives had safely made their escape from imprisonment. They did not wait a moment, but hastened to place as great a distance as possible between the pah and themselves. They avoided the shores of the lake, and went along the narrowest paths towards the mountains.

They walked quickly, and tried to avoid showing themselves at any point where they might be seen by the savages: they did not speak, but glided along like shadows through the bushes. Where were they going? At random; but they were free.

About five, day began to break, streaks of blue showing through the dark grey clouds. Misty peaks appeared in the morning vapours, showing that the sun would soon rise, but fortunately its rise would be the signal for their escape to be discovered and not for their death.

Their progress was slow, for the paths were narrow and abrupt. Robert, happy and triumphant at his success, led the way, the rest following.

Only another half-hour, and the sun would emerge through the mists on the horizon.

During this half-hour the fugitives sped along at random. Paganel was not there to direct them—Paganel, whose absence left a dark shadow on their happiness—but they kept in an easterly direction as much as possible. They had soon reached a height of 500 feet above Lake Taupo, and the sharpness of the morning air, increased by this altitude, made them suffer intensely. The undefined forms of the mountains and hills rose one above another; but Glenarvan cared nothing about losing his way, he thought only of finding a safe hiding-place. An exit from the mountainous labyrinth could be found later.

At last the sun appeared, and threw its first rays before the fugitives.

Suddenly a terrible howling, produced by a hundred cries, rent the air. It arose from the pah, whose exact position Glenarvan had forgotten, and a thick curtain of mist spread at their feet prevented them from the valleys below.

But they could have no doubt that their flight had been discovered. Could they escape the natives' pursuit? Had they been seen? Had they left any traces behind them? Then the mist lifted a little, and they saw 300 feet below them a multitude of frantic savages.

They could see, but they were not seen. Fresh howlings could be heard, and the whole tribe, after having in vain tried to scale the rock on which the Ware-Atoua stood, rushed out of the en-

closure and hastened, by the shortest paths, in pursuit of the wretched prisoners who were fleeing from their vengeance.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TABOOED MOUNTAIN

THE TOP of the mountain they were ascending still rose a hundred feet above them. To get to the other side, out of sight of the Maoris, the fugitives had to reach it, so they hastened their steps, for the sounds made it clear that the horde of savages was coming nearer and nearer; indeed, they had already reached the foot of the mountain.

‘Courage! Courage! My friends,’ Glenarvan urged his companions on by voice and gesture.

In a few minutes they had reached the summit of the mountain; then they turned round to estimate their position.

From this height they could look over lake Taupo, which stretched away to the west, surrounded by its picturesque framework of mountains. To the north were the peaks of Pirongia—in the south the flaming crater of Tongariro; but towards the east the view was bounded by a barrier of peaks and ridges, which joined the Waihi Ranges. They would have to descend on the opposite side and take to the narrow gorges, which perhaps had no outlet. Glenarvan looked anxiously around him; as the mists had now dispersed in the warmth of the sun’s rays, he was able to see every movement of the Maoris clearly. They were not more than 500 feet below, so the fugitives must not halt another moment: exhausted or not, they must continue their flight.

‘Come, let’s make haste,’ he shouted, ‘before we get cut off.’

But just as the poor women were once more rising to their feet by a supreme effort, MacNabbs stopped them, and said: ‘There’s no need, Glenarvan. Look!’

There was an inexplicable change in the Maoris’ movements.

The pursuit had suddenly been interrupted as if by some imperious counter-order. The band of natives had stopped like the waves of the sea before an insurmountable rock.

The savages, their thirst for blood aroused, were standing at the foot of the mountain, howling and gesticulating, shaking their guns and hachets, but not advancing a foot. Their dogs, like themselves rooted to the ground, were barking with rage.

What could have happened? What invisible power was holding back the savages? The fugitives looked on without understanding and in terror, thinking every moment that Kai-Koumou's tribe would break through the charm which held them back.

Suddenly John Mangles gave a cry which made his companions turn round. He pointed to a little fort at the top of the mountain, not many paces from them.

'Kara-Tete's tomb!' Robert explained.

'Is that true, Robert?' asked Glenarvan.

'Yes, my lord, it is the tomb; I'm sure of it.'

Robert was right; it was the tomb of the New Zealand chief, in their flight they had reached the summit of Mannganamu.

Lord Glenarvan, followed by his companions, went towards the tomb. A large opening, hung with mats, gave access to it. He was about to enter when all at once he drew back quickly.

'A savage!' he exclaimed.

'A savage in the tomb?' asked the major. 'No matter, let's go in.'

On entering they found a Maori inside, clothed in a large phormium cloak; it was too dark for them to see his features. He seemed very peaceable, and was eating his breakfast with the most complete indifference.

Glenarvan was about to speak to him when the native forestalled him, and said, in a friendly tone and in good English: 'Be seated, my lord; breakfast is served.'

It was Paganel. Paganel had been found!

The safety of them all was represented by his person. They were about to ask him how he had reached the top of Mannganamu, but Glenarvan stopped this inopportune curiosity.

'The savages!' he exclaimed.

'The savages!' Paganel shrugged his shoulders; 'I have a sovereign contempt for them! Come and look.'

The New Zealanders were still in the same place, and uttering the most frightful cries.

'Cry! Shout! Exhaust yourselves, you stupid creatures!'

‘Paganel addressed them. ‘I defy you to ascend this mountain!’

‘Why?’ asked Glenarvan.

‘Because the chief is buried here; because the tomb protects us; because the mountain is taboo!’

‘Taboo?’

‘Yes, and that is why I took refuge here. It is as safe a refuge as one of the sanctuaries of the middle ages.’

‘God is on our side!’ cried Lady Glenarvan.

The fugitives were not yet safe, but this was a reprieve of which they were anxious to take advantage.

‘And now, my friends,’ said Paganel, ‘if these wretches think they’ll tire out our patience, they are mistaken. Before two days have passed we’ll be out of their reach.’

‘But how are we to make our escape?’ asked Glenarvan.

‘I don’t know,’ answered Paganel; ‘but we’ll manage it somehow.’

And now every one was anxious to hear the geographer’s adventures. But, strange to say, they could scarcely get a word from him about himself. He, so fond of talking, would only reply evasively to the questions of his friends.

‘What a change has come over Paganel,’ thought MacNabbs.

Indeed the savant did not seem himself. He folded his phormium cloak around him and appeared anxious to avoid being looked at.

His embarrassed manner, when he was questioned about himself, did not escape their notice; but they were careful not to mention it. As to his adventures, he simply told his companions:

After Kara-Tete’s death, Paganel profiting, like Robert, by the tumult amongst the savages, made his escape from the pah; but less fortunate than young Grant, he fell into another encampment of Maoris. Their chief was a finely-built man, of great intelligence, evidently superior to the warriors of his tribe. This chief spoke English correctly, and saluted the new-comer in native fashion, by rubbing his nose against the geographer’s.

Paganel wondered if he were to consider himself a prisoner. But seeing that he could not move a step without being graciously accompanied by the chief, he soon knew what to think.

This chief, named *Hihy*, ‘Sunbeam’ was not a bad sort of man.

The spectacles and the telescope made him think highly of Paganel, and he kept him near his person, not only by gifts, but by phormium ropes.

This went on for three days. During that time was Paganel well or ill-treated? 'Yes and no,' he said, without further explanation. In short, he was a prisoner, and except that he was free from the near prospect of death, his condition was not much better than that of his unfortunate friends. But fortunately, one night he managed to bite his cords through and escape.

He had seen from a distance the burial of the chief, and he knew that the tomb was at the top of Mannganam, and that for this reason the mountain was taboo. So he decided to take refuge there, not wishing to go further away till he knew the fate of his companions. He succeeded in his perilous enterprise, and arrived in the night at Kara-Tete's tomb.

This was Paganel's narrative. Was he deliberately omitting certain circumstances of his sojourn with the natives? More than once his embarrassment led his companions to think so. However that might be, he received unanimous congratulations, and from the past they returned to the present.

Their situation was still serious. If the savages would not risk climbing Mannganam, still they could count upon hunger and thirst to make the fugitives yield. It was a question of time, and savages have great patience. Glenarvan did not hide the difficulties of their position from himself, but he decided to wait for favourable circumstances, and, if need be, to make them. First he must carefully reconnoitre Mannganam, to find some means of escape, and he began by estimating the height of the mountain. The ridge, about a mile long, which united it to the Wahaiti chain, sank imperceptibly towards the plain, where its narrow, sharp descent presented the only practicable way of escape. If the fugitives could succeed in passing along it, favoured by night, they might be able to hide themselves in the deep valleys of the ranges, and to throw the Maori warriors off the track.

But this route was dangerous in more ways than one. Towards its foot it was within gunshot range and Glenarvan and his friends, having ventured upon the most dangerous part of the ridge, were saluted by a shower of bullets, which fortunately did them no harm. Some of the wadding, carried by the wind, was blown to

their feet. It was made of printed paper; Paganel picked this up and managed, with some little trouble, to decipher it.

‘Do you know, my friends,’ he said ‘what these creatures had their guns with?’

‘What?’ asked Glenarvan.

‘With leaves of the Bible! If that’s the use they make of the sacred writings, I pity their missionaries,’ and he read from the paper, respected by fire and powder this verse:—

‘120th Psalm. “In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me.”’

‘My friends,’ said Glenarvan, ‘we must repeat those words of hope to our dear brave companions.’

As they returned along the steep narrow paths to the tomb, they were surprised to feel, at short intervals, a certain trembling of the ground. It was clear that steam produced by the action of subterranean fires was pent under the crust of the mountain.

This fact was not likely to surprise people who had passed through the boiling springs of the Waikato. They knew that the central region of Ika-Na-Maui is essentially volcanic: it resembles a sieve through which the vapours of the earth escape in boiling and sulphurous springs.

Paganel, who had already noticed this, called his friends’ attention to the volcanic nature of the mountain. ‘The Mannganamu is one of the numerous cones which rise all over the middle of the island—a future volcano,’ he explained. ‘The least underground action will bring about the formation of a crater.’

‘But,’ said Glenarvan, ‘we’re no more in danger here than when we were close to the boiler of the *Duncan*.’

‘I agree with you,’ the major replied, ‘but however strong a boiler may be, after long service it sometimes bursts.’

‘Indeed, MacNabbs,’ Paganel agreed, ‘I’ve no wish to stay long on this possible volcano. If a practicable route should offer itself, I’d leave it this minute. But now for the tomb: it is our fortress, our castle, our dining-room, our work-room. We’re safe here. Ladies, let me do the honours of this charming dwelling.’

When the savages saw the fugitives once more profaning the sacred place, they uttered some frightful cries and fired at them. Fortunately, however, the shots did not travel as far as their cries, but fell midway.

As it was clear that the superstition of the Maoris was stronger than their anger, the party entered the tomb without any fear. It was enclosed by a palisade of stakes painted red and covered with symbolical figures and tattooing, which recounted the noble nature and the mighty deeds of the deceased. Chaplets of amulets, shells, and carved stones hung from one post to another, and the floor was covered with a carpet of green leaves. In the centre a slight mound indicated the lately-made tomb. There lay the chief's arms, his guns loaded and primed, his superb hatchet of green jade, with a supply of powder and bullets, enough for the happy hunting-grounds.

'Here's a whole arsenal,' said Paganel, 'of which we shall make a better use than the deceased.'

'Why, these guns are of English make!' the major exclaimed.

'Here's something that will be more useful to us,' Paganel replied, 'the food and water meant for Kara-Tetc.'

There was indeed food enough to support ten people for fifteen days, or to supply the deceased for all eternity. It was vegetable in nature, consisting of fern roots, sweet batatas, and potatoes—the latter imported by the Europeans many years before. Large vessels contained pure water, which figures extensively at New Zealand meals, and a dozen baskets, artistically plaited, contained tablets of a green kind of gum of unknown nature.

The fugitives were, therefore, well provided against hunger and thirst for several days. Glenarvan gave some of the food to Olbinett to prepare for them, but he did not know how to cook these roots, and he had no fire. Paganel, never at a loss, simply advised him to bury the fern roots and sweet batatas in the ground. The temperature of its upper layers was very high, and if a thermometer had been put in the earth it would have shown a temperature of 140° to 150° Fahrenheit. But Olbinett met with almost more heat than he wanted, for while he was making a hole in which to bury his roots a column of vapour burst forth and rose hissing into the air.

The steward fell back, terribly frightened.

'Fill up the hole!' Aided by the two sailors the major rushed forward and covered the opening with earth and stones.

Paganel considered the phenomenon seriously and exclaimed—

'What benefits Heaven sends us! After Kara-Tete's water and

food, fire from the ground! Why, this mountain is a paradise. I suggest that we found a colony, and take up our abode here for the rest of our days. We shall be the Robinson Crusoes of the Mannganamu. In truth I don't know what more we could want on this comfortable cone.'

'Nothing, so long as it's solid,' replied John Mangles.

'It wasn't made yesterday,' said Paganel. 'For a long time it has resisted the action of the internal fires, and it will hold together until we go.'

'Breakfast is served,' Olbinett announced, as gravely as if he had been at Castle Malcolm.

There was not much choice of food, and opinions were divided touching the edible fern root. Some of them thought it sweet and agreeable, the others insipid and remarkably tough. The sweet batatas, cooked in the scorching soil, were excellent, and the geographer commented that Kara-Tete was not to be pitied.

When their hunger was satisfied, Glenarvan proposed to discuss, without delay, a plan of escape.

'Already!' said Paganel, piteously. 'How can you think of leaving this delightful place so soon?'

'But, M. Paganel,' replied Lady Glenarvan, 'if we concede that we're at Capua, yet we must not imitate Hannibal.'

'I think,' Glenarvan told them, 'we must try to escape before we're driven to it by famine. Tonight, favoured by the darkness, we'll try to pass through the circle of natives and reach the valleys on the east.'

'Perfect,' agreed Paganel, 'if the Maoris will only let us pass.'

'And if they prevent us?' asked John Mangles.

'Then we must resort to the last extremity,' replied Paganel.

The only thing to do was to wait for night to pass through the line of natives. These were still in the same place, and their numbers seemed to have increased: here and there blazing fires formed a circle round the base of the cone.

When darkness fell upon the surrounding valleys the Mannganamu seemed to rise out of a vast brazier, its summit lost in the dense clouds.

At nine, the night being very dark, Glenarvan and John Mangles decided to reconnoitre before letting their companions make the perilous attempt. They descended as lightly as possible for

about ten minutes, till they reached the narrow ridge which crossed the line of natives about fifty feet above their encampment. All had gone well up to this time, and the Maoris, lying close beside their braziers, did not seem to have perceived the two fugitives, who were still making their way onwards. But suddenly, to right and left, a shower of bullets assailed them.

‘Back!’ cried Glenarvan; ‘these bandits have eyes like cats.’

He and John Mangles quickly reascended the steep side of the mountain, and reassured their friends, who had been alarmed by the sound of the fire-arms. Two bullets had passed through Glenarvan’s hat, but except for that neither he nor John Mangles had suffered any harm. It now seemed impossible to pass along the ridge between these sharp-shooters.

‘Wait till tomorrow,’ Paganel suggested, ‘and as we can’t deceive the vigilance of these savages, you must let me manage them in my own way.’

The temperature was very cold, but fortunately Kara-Tete had been provided with many phormium coverings. They made use of them without scruple, and, guarded by the superstition of the natives, they were soon calmly asleep.

CHAPTER XIV

PAGANEL TO THE RESCUE

THE NEXT day, 17th February, the first rays of the sun awoke the travellers. The Maoris, who had been astir for a long time, were going to and fro, never relaxing in their watch, and a furious clamour saluted the Europeans at their first appearance from the sacred enclosure.

They looked at the surrounding mountains, at the mist-clad valleys and at the surface of Lake Taupo, which the morning wind was lightly ruffling. Then, anxious to hear Paganel’s scheme, they surrounded him with eager curiosity.

‘My friends,’ he began, ‘my plan is so excellent that, if it doesn’t produce all the effect I hope for, or even if it fails, our

situation will be no worse than it was. But it ought to succeed, and it will succeed.'

'Well, what is it?' asked MacNabbs.

'This,' Paganel replied. 'As the native's superstition has made this mountain a place of refuge for us, superstition must now aid us to leave it. If I can succeed in persuading Kai-Koumou that we have been punished for our profanation, that a divine anger has descended upon us, in a word, that we have died a terrible death, don't you think he'll abandon Mannganamu and return to his village?'

'That's not unlikely,' said Glenarvan.

'And what terrible death do you threaten us with?' asked Lady Glenarvan.

'With the death of the sacreligious, my friends,' answered Paganel. 'The flames of vengeance are under our feet; let's open a way for them!'

'What! You suggest making a volcano?' exclaimed John Mangles.

'Yes, an imitation volcano, whose fury we can regulate. There's plenty of vapour and subterranean fire here and it only wants an outlet. Let's produce an artificial eruption for our own benefit.'

'That's a good idea,' agreed the major.

'You understand,' the geographer continued, 'that we must pretend that we have been devoured by the flames of the New Zealand Pluto, and disappear into the tomb of Kara-Tete—'

'Where we can stay four or five days if need be, until the savages are convinced of our death and give up guarding us' said Glenarvan.

'But suppose they decide to make sure of our punishment by ascending the mountain?' asked Miss Grant.

'No,' replied Paganel, 'they won't do that. The mountain is tabooed, and when it has itself devoured its profaners its taboo will be more strict than ever.'

'It's an excellent scheme,' said Glenarvan. 'There's only one thing against it, that the savages may persist in remaining so long at the foot of the mountain that our food runs out.'

'And when shall we try this?' asked Lady Glenarvan.

'This very night,' answered Paganel, 'just when it's darkest.'

‘Agreed,’ said MacNabbs. ‘Paganel, you’re a man of genius, and though I never get enthusiastic, I vouch for your success. Ah, these villains! We’re going to show them a small miracle, which will retard their conversion for at least a century! May the missionaries forgive us!’

Paganel’s idea was certainly good, but it would be difficult to put it into practice. Might not the volcano swallow up the audacious people who should produce a crater? Could they regulate the eruption when the vapours, flames and lava were liberated? Might not the entire cone collapse and swallow them in a gulf of fire? This was trenching upon phenomena of which Nature reserves for herself the entire monopoly.

Paganel had foreseen all these difficulties, but he knew he had to act with prudence, and not push things to extremities. The appearance of an eruption was enough to dupe the Maoris, and not its terrible reality.

How long this day seemed! They counted the interminable hours. Everything was prepared for the flight: the food had been divided into small packages, and some mats and fire-arms, taken from the chief’s tomb, completed their light baggage. No need to say that their preparations were made out of sight of the savages.

At six, the steward served their dinner. Where and when would their next meal be? The main dish was composed of half a dozen large rats caught by Wilson, and cooked in the ground. Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant obstinately refused to touch this food, so much esteemed in New Zealand, but the others regaled themselves on it like true Maoris. The flesh was truly excellent and savoury, and the six rats were devoured to their last bone.

It was now twilight, the sun having disappeared behind a bank of thick, stormy-looking clouds. Some flashes of lightning let up the horizon, and thunder rolled in the distance. Paganel rejoiced that a storm was coming to help him, for savages are greatly influenced by the phenomena of Nature. The New Zealanders think that thunder is the angry voice of Noui-Atoua, and lightning the furious flashes of his eyes, so that their divinity would appear to have come in person to chastise the profaners of the sacred mountain.

By eight, the summit of Mannganamu had disappeared in

thick darkness. The sky would form a dark background to the flames that the hand of Paganel was about to produce.

The Maoris could no longer see their prisoners. The moment for action had arrived.

They must begin at once, so all the men set to work together.

The place for the crater was chosen at about thirty feet from Kara-Tete's tomb. It was important that no harm should befall the tomb itself, for with its disappearance there would be an end of the taboo, but Paganel had noticed an enormous block of stone, round which the vapours were escaping with special intensity. This block stopped up a little natural crater, and kept down merely by its weight the outburst of the subterranean flames. If they could succeed in removing it, all that they wanted would be done.

They made themselves levers of stakes taken from the palisade around the tomb, and vigorously attacked the rocky mass. Under their combined efforts the block moved, and they had already made a sort of trench on the side of the mountain, so that it could slide down the slope. As they moved it the ground began to tremble more violently, and the flames roared and hissed under the thin crust. The bold workmen, like Cyclops controlling the fires within the earth, worked on silently. Soon fissures and jets of burning vapour showed them that things were getting dangerous.

A supreme effort removed the block, which slid slowly down the side of the mountain and disappeared. Then the thin crust of earth gave way. A fiery column rose towards the heavens with a series of loud explosions, while streams of boiling water and lava flowed towards the encampment of the savages and down into the village. Then the cone trembled, and seemed about to be swallowed in a bottomless gulf.

Glenarvan and his companions hardly had time to escape from the eruption; they fled inside the tomb, but not without having received some drops of water of a temperature not far below boiling point. This water gave off an odour at first like soup, but it soon changed to a strong odour of sulphur.

Then the mud, the lava, and the volcanic fragments disappeared under the torrents of fire which were running down the

sides of the Mannganamu. The neighbouring mountains, with their deep valleys, were lit up by the flame from the eruption.

All the savages had risen to their feet, howling at the stream of lava which had invaded their bivouac. Those whom the flame had not reached fled up the surrounding hills, and there turned in fright to look at that fearful phenomenon, this volcano in which the anger of their god had buried those who had profaned the sacred mountain. In the midst of the noise made by the eruption, they were heard howling their sacred cry, 'Taboo, taboo, taboo!'

Meantime an enormous quantity of vapour, burning stones, and lava flowed from the crater. It was no longer a mere geyser, like those in the neighbourhood of Mount Hecla. All the volcanic matter had till then been contained under the surface of the cone, the safety-valves of the Rongariro having sufficed for its escape; but when another exit was opened it rushed out with extreme vehemence, and that night, by a law of equilibrium, the other eruptions in the island lost some of their usual intensity. An hour later, this new volcano had been completely formed, and large streams of burning lava were running down its sides.

A whole legion of rats came out of their holes and scampered over the hot ground. All night, and even during the storm which burst from the heavens, the eruption went on with a violence that seriously alarmed Glenarvan: and the prisoners, sheltering behind the palisade, watched the frightful progress of the eruption. Morning came, and the fury of the volcano was as great as ever; the New Zealanders were staring at the smoking summit of Mannganamu with religious fear.

When Kai-Koumou came into the midst of his warriors, Glenarvan recognised him at once. He advanced to the foot of the cone, on the side opposite to the one on which the lava was pouring down, but did not attempt to advance a step further.

There, his arms extended like a sorcerer performing an incantation, he made some grimaces and movements, whose meaning did not escape the prisoners. It was as Paganel had foreseen. Kai-Koumou was launching against the avenging mountain a fresh and more vigorous taboo. Immediately after this the savages filed away down the winding paths to the pah.

‘They’re going away!’ exclaimed Glenarvan. ‘They’re leaving their post! God be praised! Our plan has succeeded!’

It is difficult to imagine the joy the wretched prisoners felt. Hope had re-entered their hearts; they forgot the past, they forgot the future, and thought only of the present! It would be no easy task to reach some European outpost in the midst of these unknown wilds, but Kai-Koumou once off the scent, they could think themselves safe from all the savages in New Zealand!

The Major did not hide the sovereign contempt he felt for these Maoris, nor did he fail to express it. He and Paganel tried which could say the most: they called the Maoris unpardonable brutes, stupid asses, idiots of the Pacific, savages of Bedlam, and so forth.

A whole day would have to pass before they could try to escape; they spent it in discussing a plan of flight. Paganel had carefully kept his map of New Zealand, so that they could pick out the safest roads.

After some discussion, the fugitives decided to go to Plenty Bay, a distance of about a hundred miles. That, at ten miles a day, would be ten days’ march.

At nine, on a dark night, Glenarvan gave the signal to set out. He and his companions, armed and equipped at Kara-Tete’s expense, began to descend Mannganamu. They stopped at the least noise, and investigated every shadow. At two hundred feet from the summit, John Mangles and Wilson, who were going first, reached the ridge so obstinately defended by the natives. If by any mischance the Maoris, more artful than the fugitives, had feigned a retreat to bring them as far as this, they were lost. Glenarvan, notwithstanding his confidence and Paganel’s jokes, could not help trembling. The safety of all depended upon those ten minutes needed to clear the ridge.

When they reached the lower point, hardly twentyfive feet separated them from the plateau where the natives had encamped on the previous evening; there the ridge, for a quarter of a mile, rose upwards towards a copse.

They cleared the lower part of the ridge without accident, and began the ascent in silence. The wood was invisible, but they knew it was there; and provided that an ambuscade did not await them, Glenarvan hoped to find a safe retreat within it. For

ten minutes the party climbed upwards: the wood ought not to be more than two hundred feet away. Suddenly John stopped; he fancied he could hear some sound coming from the darkness before them. He stood motionless so long that they were all terribly frightened. They waited, in an indescribable agony of suspense.

But, finding that the noise was not repeated, John again went onwards. Soon the wood was clearly seen through the darkness; a few more steps, and the fugitives had reached it and hidden themselves under the thick leaves.

CHAPTER XV

BETWEEN TWO FIRES

NIGHT FAVOURED their escape, and they had to take advantage of it to leave the neighbourhood of Lake Taupo. Paganel took the lead, and his marvellous instinct as a traveller revealed itself anew during this difficult journey across the mountains. He managed with surprising cleverness in the darkness, choosing without hesitation paths almost invisible, and always keeping in the same direction, from which he did not deviate. He seemed able to distinguish the smallest objects in the darkness.

They walked on for three hours without stopping, and then Paganel diverged a little towards the south-east, so as to reach a narrow passage between the Kaimanawa and Wahiti Ranges, which led into the Auckland and Hawkes Bay road. Having cleared this gorge, he expected to leave the road, and, sheltered by the mountain chains, to reach the coast through the uninhabited parts of the province.

By nine next morning, they had travelled twelve miles in twelve hours. More could not be required from these courageous women. The place was suitable for a camp, for they had reached the defile between the two mountain chains. The overland route lay to the right, towards the south.

The food was taken from the bags, and done justice to, and their halt was prolonged until two, when the travellers set out

towards the east. In the evening they halted again, eight miles further on.

Next day the route offered many serious difficulties. The travellers had to cross the remarkable district of volcanic lakes, geysers, and sulphur springs, which extends east of the Wahiti Ranges. Their eyes were much more satisfied than their legs, for at every quarter of a mile there were windings and very fatiguing obstacles: but what a strange sight, and what an infinite variety of the grand scenes of Nature!

In this vast expanse of twenty square miles, the subterranean forces manifested themselves in many different ways. Salt springs, wonderfully clear, flowed from beneath thickets of native tea-trees. They gave a penetrating odour of burnt powder, and deposited upon the ground a white sediment like sparkling snow: their limpid waters were almost at boiling point, while other springs nearby spread themselves out in frozen sheets and gigantic ferns grew on their banks in the greatest luxuriance.

It may well be understood that the travellers suffered great fatigue in passing through regions so full of obstacles. To camp was very difficult; they met with no birds worth shooting, and had to content themselves with fern roots and sweet batatas. So they were all anxious to leave this arid country.

On 23rd February, they were fifty miles from Mannganamu. On that day, MacNabbs and Robert killed three kiwis, which held the place of honour at their table, but not for long, for in a few minutes they had disappeared, bones and all. Then, at their dessert, between the courses of potatoes and sweet batatas, Paganel made a suggestion which was received with enthusiasm. He proposed giving the name of Glenarvan to the unknown mountain at whose base they were encamped, and he carefully wrote on his map the name of the Scottish nobleman.

To record all the incidents of this journey would be monotonous, and not very interesting. Only two or three incidents of any importance marked their journey from the lakes to the Pacific Ocean.

They walked during all that day through forests and plains, while John took their bearings from the sun and the stars. They had not suffered from the heat or rain, but their growing fatigue

made them more and more anxious to reach the missionary stations.

Glenarvan walked along, thinking continually, as he approached the coast, of the *Duncan* and his crew. In brooding over his murdered sailors, he forgot the dangers that still threatened him and his party until they should reach Auckland. The horrible picture never left him.

There was no more talk of Captain Grant. What was the use, when they could do nothing more to search for him? If his name were still mentioned, it was only in the conversations between his daughter and John Mangles. John had not reminded Mary of what she had said during that last night in the Ware-Atoua. He was too sensible to act upon words uttered in a moment of supreme despair.

When ever he mentioned Captain Grant, he still made plans for the continuation of the search, assuring Mary that Lord Glenarvan would resume this fruitless enterprise. She was only too pleased to listen to such words, and she and John, united by the same thoughts, shared the same hope. Lady Glenarvan often took part in their conversation, but she tried to bring back the young people to the sad reality.

Meanwhile, MacNabbs, Robert, Wilson, and Mulrady amused themselves shooting, and each of them provided his share of the game, always a welcome addition to their provisions.

Paganel, wrapped in his phormium cloak, kept apart, silent and pensive. Yet though amidst trials, dangers, fatigues, and privations, even the best characters might change and become bitter and cold, this unfortunate little party remained united, devoted, and ready to die for one another.

On 25th February, the route was obstructed by a river, which according to Paganel's map ought to be the Waikari. They were able to wade through it.

For two days, shrub-covered plains succeeded one another without interruption. Half the distance which separates Lake Taupo from the coast had been traversed, if not without fatigue, at least without mishap.

Then appeared immense and interminable forests, which reminded them of Australia, though here the kauri replaced the eucalyptus. Although their admiration had been constantly

amused for four months, Glenarvan and his companions were delighted at the sight of these gigantic pines, worthy rivals of the cedars of Lebanon and the mammoth trees of California. These kauris, called in botanical language *Abietacees damarines*, measured a hundred feet in height before the branches began to spread. They grew in clumps, and the forest was composed, not of trees but of innumerable groups of trees which, at the height of two hundred feet, spread out in the air a parasol of green leaves.

Some of these pines, still young although they were more than a hundred years old, were like the red pines of Europe, carrying a dark crown of foliage, ending in sharp cones. The more venerable trees, five or six centuries old, formed immense tents of verdure, supported by the inextricable bifurcations of their branches. These patriarchs of the New Zealand forest measured about fifty feet round, and the united arms of the travellers could not span their giant trunks.

For three days the little party plodded on under these vast arches, over a clayey soil, which the foot of man had never touched. This was clear from the heaps of resinous gum accumulated in many places at the foot of the kauris.

There were numerous kiwis, so rare in a country frequented by the Maoris, for these inaccessible forests are the refuge of these curious birds, so much chased by the New Zealand dogs. They provided the travellers with abundant wholesome food.

Paganel had the good fortune to see, in a distant copse, a couple of gigantic fowls. His naturalist's instinct awoke; he called his companions, and notwithstanding their fatigue, he, with the major, and Robert, followed the tracks of the birds.

It is easy to understand the ardent curiosity of the geographer, for he had recognised, or thought he had recognised, these birds as moas, belonging to a species of the dinormis, which many savants have classed as lost. This, however, confirmed the opinion of certain travellers about the actual existence of these extraordinary birds, contemporary in New Zealand with the megatherium and the pterodactyls. They appeared about eighteen feet high, and resembled immense ostriches, but they were extremely timid, and ran away as fast as they could. The travellers tried a

shot or two at them, but without effect, and they soon had to give up the chase.

That evening, 1st March, Glenarvan and his companions at last left the immense kauri forest; they camped at the foot of the Ikirangi Mountain rising to a height of 5,500 feet.

They had then got nearly a hundred miles from Mannganamu, and the coast was about thirty miles farther. John Mangles had hoped that they would have covered the distance in ten days, but he had not realised the difficulties they would have to encounter. The obstacles and imperfections of the road had lengthened it by a fifth, and by the time they reached Ikirangi Mountain, the travellers were completely worn out. There was still two more good 'days' march before they reached the coast, and now renewed activity and extreme vigilance became necessary, for they were about to pass through a part of the country much frequented by the natives.

However, each of them mastered his fatigue, and the next day the little party set out at dawn.

Between Ikirangi Mountain, which they left to the right, and Hardy Mountain, the summit of which rose on the left, the journey became very painful. For a distance of ten miles they had to pass through a plain covered with 'Supple Jack,' a creeping plant. At each step they became entangled in it, and it twisted itself like a serpent round their arms and bodies.

For two days they had to proceed hatchet in hand, and to struggle against this hydra of a hundred thousand heads, this tenacious and tormenting plant, which Paganel would have liked to class amongst the zoophytes.

In these plains the sportsmen of the party could not get their usual success, for hunting was impossible. Their provisions were drawing to an end, and there was no chance of renewing them. There was no water, and they could not quench their thirst, rendered the greater by fatigue.

Thus the sufferings of Glenarvan and his party became horrible, and for the first time their moral courage almost left them.

At last, no longer walking, but dragging themselves along, bodies without souls, led on by that instinct of self-preservation which survives every other feeling, they reached Pottin Point on the shores of the Pacific.

«Here they saw some deserted huts, the ruins of a village recently devastated by the war, and some abandoned fields, and everywhere the signs of pillage and incendiarism. Their fate had another terrible trial in store for the unfortunate travellers.

They were proceeding along the shore when there suddenly appeared a detachment of natives, who advanced gesticulating towards them. Glenarvan and his companions, brought to a standstill by the sea, could not escape and they had made up their minds to sell their lives dearly, when John Mangles shouted 'A boat! A boat!'

Stranded on the shore, a few yards from them, there was indeed a six-oared canoe. To get it afloat, to throw themselves into it, and to fly from this dangerous shore, was the work of a moment. John Mangles, MacNabbs, Wilson, and Mulrady took the oars, Glenarvan the steering oar; the two ladies, with Paganel Olbinett and Robert lay down in the bottom of the boat.

In ten minutes they were a quarter of a mile from shore. The sea was calm, and the fugitives kept a complete silence.

John, not wishing to go too far away from the coast, was about to give the order to keep near land, when he suddenly stopped rowing. He had just noticed three canoes putting off from Lottin Point, with the clear intention of giving them chase.

'Out to sea! Out to sea!' he shouted.

The canoe, urged forwards by the four rowers, carried them quickly onwards to the open sea. For half an hour they kept well ahead of the three canoes; but the unfortunate men, already exhausted by fatigue, began to feel their strength giving way, and the canoes gained rapidly upon them, until scarcely two miles separated them. There seemed no possibility of escaping the savages, who, armed with their long rifles, were about to fire upon them. What could Glenarvan do now? Standing erect in the stern of the boat, he scanned the horizon for some chimerical help. What did he expect? Had he any presentiment? Suddenly his face lighted up, and he pointed out to sea.

'A ship!' he exclaimed. 'A ship! Row! Row hard!'

Not one of the four rowers turned to look at this unhopèd-for ship, for not a stroke must be lost, but Paganel rose and brought his telescope to bear upon it.

'Yes,' he agreed, 'a ship! A steamer! She's putting on steam! She's coming towards us! Courage, my brave comrades!'

As the fugitives pushed on with renewed energy, the steamer became more clearly into sight, until they could distinguish her two masts and the columns of black smoke from her funnel. Glenarvan, giving up the steering to Robert, had taken the geographer's telescope and followed every movement of the ship. But what was the amazement of John Mangles and his companions when they saw his face contract and become pale, while the telescope fell from his hands. One word was enough to explain his sudden despair.

'The *Duncan*!' he exclaimed. 'The *Duncan* and the convicts!'

'The *Duncan*!' John had dropped his oar and risen to his feet.

'Yes! Death on both sides!' murmured Glenarvan; he was utterly overcome.

It was impossible to doubt that it was the yacht, the yacht with her crew of bandits! The major could hardly keep back an oath. It was too much!

The yacht had put on full steam, and was not more than half a mile from them, while the savages were getting nearer to them, and kept up a continual fire, the bullets ploughing up the water round the boat. Suddenly a loud report was heard, and a shot, hurled from the cannon on the yacht, whizzed over the heads of the fugitives. They were between two fires, and they stayed motionless between the *Duncan* and the natives' canoes.

John Mangles, mad with despair, seized his hatchet. He was about to smash the boat and drown his unfortunate companions, when a cry from Robert stopped him.

'Tom Austin! Tom Austin!' shouted the boy. 'He's on board! I can see him! He's recognised us! He's waving his hat!'

The hatchet stayed uplifted in John's hands.

A second shot whistled over their heads, cutting in two the nearest of the three canoes, while cheers arose from the *Duncan*.

The savages were alarmed; they fled, and returned to the shore.

A short time later the ten fugitives, without knowing how, without understanding why, were safe on board the *Duncan*.

WHY WAS THE *DUNCAN* THERE?

IT WOULD be impossible to describe the emotions of Glenarvan and his friends when they found themselves once more on the *Duncan*, after so many trials and privations. The crew at first welcomed them with loud cheers; but at the sight of Glenarvan and his companions, their clothing in rags, their haggard faces bearing the mark of horrible sufferings, their demonstrations ended. These were spectres rather than the brave, joyful travellers who, three months before, had started on their search so boldly. Chance, chance alone, had brought them back to this ship, which they had never again hoped to see.

But before thinking of their fatigue, and the imperious calls of hunger and thirst, Glenarvan asked Tom Austin to explain his presence on these shores. What had brought the *Duncan* to the eastern shores of New Zealand? How was it she wasn't in the hands of Ben Joyce?

'And the convicts?' he asked. 'What have you done with the convicts?'

'The convicts?' Tom Austin repeated, in the tone of a man quite at a loss to understand what is meant.

'Yes, the wretches who attacked the yacht!'

'What yacht?' asked Tom Austin. 'Your lordship's yacht?'

'Yes, Tom; the *Duncan*, and that Ben Joyce who came on board.'

'I don't know Ben Joyce; I've never seen him,' replied Austin.

'Never seen him?' Glenarvan was astonished at the old sailor's reply. 'Then tell me, Tom, how is it that the *Duncan* is cruising at this very moment off New Zealand?'

If the travellers were already surprised at Tom Austin's answers, what was their amazement when he calmly told them, 'The *Duncan* is cruising here by your lordship's orders.'

'By my orders?' exclaimed Glenarvan.

'Yes, my lord; I have only conformed to your instructions, contained in your letter of the fourteenth of January.'

'My letter! My letter!' repeated Glenarvan.

So the letter, dated from Snowy River, had actually reached the *Duncan*!

'Let's see,' he said; 'explain it to us, for I must be dreaming. You received a letter, Tom?'

'Yes, my lord.'

'At Melbourne?'

'At Melbourne, just when I was repairing the damage.'

'And this letter?'

'It wasn't in your handwriting, but it was signed by you, my lord.'

'My letter was brought to you by a convict named Ben Joyce?'

'No, by a sailor named Ayrton, quartermaster of the *Britannia*.'

'Yes, Ayrton and Ben Joyce are the same person. But what did this letter say?'

'It contained an order for me to leave Melbourne without delay, and to cruise off the east shore of—'

'Of Australia!' Glenarvan's vehemence disconcerted the old sailor.

'Of Australia?' Tom stared. 'No, of New Zealand!'

'Of Australia, Tom! Of Australia!' the travellers exclaimed with one voice.

Austin felt dizzy. Glenarvan had spoken so positively that he feared he had made a mistake in reading the letter. He, the exact and faithful sailor, how had he made such a blunder? He reddened and was distressed.

'Never mind, Tom,' Lady Glenarvan comforted him; 'God willed it—'

'Pardon me, madam,' Tom protested. 'It isn't possible I could have made such a mistake. Ayrton read the letter too, and it was he who urged me to go to the Australian coast!'

'Ayrton!' exclaimed Glenarvan.

'Himself! He insisted that it was a mistake, and that you meant me to meet you at Twofold Bay!'

'Have you got the letter, Tom?' the major, too, was greatly perplexed.

'Yes, Mr. MacNabbs,' replied Austin. 'I'll go and get it.'

Austin hurried to his cabin, and during his brief absence no-

body spoke except the major, who, staring fixedly at Paganel, said, 'Well, Paganel, that would be a little too bad.'

'What?' asked the geographer, who, his back bent and his spectacles on his nose, looked like a gigantic question-mark.

Austin returned, holding the letter written by Paganel and signed by Glenarvan.

'Read it, your lordship,' he said.

Glenarvan read:—

'Tom Austin is ordered to set sail without delay, and to take the *Duncan* to the eastern coast of New Zealand!'

'New Zealand!' and, seizing the letter from Glenarvan, Paganel rubbed his eyes and adjusted his spectacles; then he too proceeded to read the letter.

'New Zealand!' his accents were impossible to describe as the letter fell from his hands.

He felt a hand upon his shoulder; turning round, he found himself face to face with the major.

'Well done, Paganel,' said MacNabbs with a serious air; 'it's a lucky thing you didn't send the *Duncan* to Cochin-China!'

This was too much for the poor geographer. The whole crew burst out laughing, and Paganel, as if he had gone out of his mind, went backwards and forwards shaking his head, and evidently not knowing what he was about. He went down the cabin stairs, came up again, walked along the deck, went on to the fore-castle. His feet became entangled in a coil of rope; he stumbled; his hands chanced to seize a rope.

At once a fearful report was heard. The cannon on the fore-castle had gone off, peppering the tranquil waves with a volley of grape-shot. The hapless Paganel had chanced upon the lanyard of a loaded cannon, which immediately went off with a noise like thunder. Stunned by the report, the geographer fell backwards down the fore-castle ladder into the steerage. Everyone thought he must be killed, and ten of the sailors rushed down and brought him up, bent double and senseless, and carried him on to the poop.

The brave Frenchman's friends were plunged into grief, and the major, who was always the doctor on such occasions, was about to remove some of Paganel's clothes to dress his wounds; but hardly had he placed his hands on the apparently-dying man

than the latter started up as if he had suddenly touched an electric battery.

'Never! Never!' he cried, and drawing together his ragged garments over his meagre body, he buttoned up his coat with inexplicable haste.

'But, Paganel—' said the major.

'No, I tell you.'

'But perhaps you've broken—'

'Yes,' Paganel replied, 'but what I've broken the carpenter can repair.'

'What is that?'

'The post that gave way when I fell.'

At this reply the roars of laughter again began. It assured the worthy Paganel's friends that he had escaped safe and sound from his adventure with the cannon.

'However,' thought the major, 'here's a strangely prudish geographer!'

But Paganel still had to answer a question which he could not avoid.

'Now, Paganel,' Glenarvan addressed him, 'answer frankly. I agree that your mistake was providential. Without you the *Duncan* would have fallen into the convicts' hands; without you we should have again been caught by the Maoris. But, tell me, by what strange association of ideas, by what supernatural absence of mind, were you led to write New Zealand instead of Australia?'

'What can I say, my dear Glenarvan,' replied Paganel, 'except that I'm a fool, an incorrigible blunderer!'

So the mysterious presence of the *Duncan* on these shores was accounted for, but after breakfast Glenarvan and John Mangles again questioned Tom Austin.

'Now, Tom, tell me,' he said, 'didn't this order to cruise off New Zealand seem very strange?'

'Yes, your lordship,' Austin replied. 'I was very much surprised, but it's not my habit to dispute the orders I receive, and I obeyed. Could I act differently? If, from not following your instructions to the letter, some misfortune had happened, shouldn't I have been culpable? Would you have done differently, captain?'

'No, Tom,' Mangles assured him.

'But what did you think?' asked Glenarvan.

'I thought, your lordship, that, in the interests of Captain Grant, I must go where you told me to go. I thought that, by some new arrangement, some vessel would bring you to New Zealand, and that I must wait for you on the eastern coast. Besides, when I left Melbourne, I kept my destination secret, and the crew did not know it till we were out at sea. But then something happened which perplexed me much.'

'What was that, Tom?' asked Glenarvan.

'When Ayrton, the quartermaster,' Tom replied, 'learnt, the day after we had set sail, the destination of the *Duncan*—

'Ayrton!' cried Glenarvan. 'Is he on board then?'

'Yes, my lord.'

In an instant the conduct of Ayrton, his long-premeditated treason, Glenarvan's wound, the waylaying of Mulrady, their miseries in the marshes of Snowy River, all came back to their memory. And, by some strange circumstances, the convict was now in their power.

'Where is he?' Glenarvan asked.

'In a cabin in the fore-castle,' answered Tom Austin, 'and he's under guard.'

'Why is he imprisoned?'

'Because, when Ayrton found that the yacht was making for New Zealand, he was in a fury, for he wanted to make me change the vessel's direction; then he threatened me, and incited the crew to revolt. I felt that he was dangerous, and that I must take precautions against him.'

'And since then?'

'Since then he has stayed in his cabin without trying to leave it.'

When the others came on deck, Glenarvan told them of Ayrton's presence on board, and announced his intention of having him brought before them.

'Must I stay?' Lady Glenarvan asked, 'for I must confess that I'll find the sight of this wretched man very painful.'

'Yes, Helena,' Lord Glenarvan replied, 'I want you to stay. Let Ben Joyce see all his victims face to face.'

Lady Glenarvan and Mary Grant stood next Lord Glenarvan,

and then came the major, Paganel, and all the others endangered so gravely by the convict's treason. The crew, although they did not understand the seriousness of the matter, none the less kept silence.

'Bring Ayrton,' was all that Glenarvan said.

CHAPTER XVII

AYRTON OR BEN JOYCE?

AYRTON APPEARED, crossing the deck with a firm step. His face looked gloomy but determined, neither boastful nor humble. When he came into Lord Glenarvan's presence, he folded his arms and waited to be questioned.

'Ayrton,' Glenarvan addressed him, 'again we meet, and this time on the very vessel that you meant to hand over to the convicts.'

At these words the quartermaster's lips trembled slightly; his face reddened, not with remorse, but with shame at his want of success. He was a prisoner on the yacht which he had hoped to command, and his fate was about to be decided.

He did not reply. Glenarvan waited patiently, but Ayrton obstinately kept silence.

'Speak, Ayrton, what have you to say?' he was asked.

Ayrton hesitated; he scowled and then, in a calm voice he replied—'I have nothing to say, my lord. I've been fool enough to let myself be caught. Do as you like.'

After making this reply, the quartermaster walked away and affected a profound indifference regarding everything around him. To look at him, one would have thought he had nothing to do with this serious matter. But Glenarvan was determined to be patient. He was very anxious to learn certain details of Ayrton's mysterious existence, especially in relation to Captain Grant and the *Britannia*. So he again began to question Ayrton, speaking as quietly as possible, and keeping down his anger by a violent effort.

'I think, Ayrton,' he said, 'that you will not refuse to answer

certain questions I want to ask you. And, firstly, am I to address you as Ayrton or Ben Joyce? And are you, or are you not, the quartermaster of the *Britannia*?'

Ayrton remained silent, deaf to every question.

Glenarvan, whose eyes were flashing, continued to question him: 'Will you tell me how you came to leave the *Britannia*, and what brought you to Australia?'

Still silence.

'Listen carefully to me, Ayrton,' continued Glenarvan. 'It is to your interest to speak. For the last time, will you answer?'

Ayrton turned his head and looked full at Glenarvan: 'My lord,' said he, 'I have nothing to say. It is not for me to prove charges made against myself.'

'They'll be easy to prove!' Glenarvan replied.

'Easy, my lord?' Ayrton jeered at him. 'Your lordship is getting on too fast. I'm certain that the best judge of Temple Bar would be undecided about me. Who can say why I went to Australia, now Captain Grant isn't here to say? Who can prove that I am the Ben Joyce sought for by the police, since I've never been in their hands, and my companions are at liberty? Who can prove anything against me, for you can prove no crime, only a blameworthy action? Who can assert that I meant to place this ship into the hands of convicts? No one, I say—no one! You have your suspicions, but you must have certainties to condemn a man, and you have none. Until you've proved the contrary, I am Ayrton, the quartermaster of the *Britannia*.'

Ayrton then relapsed into his former indifference, assuming no doubt that his declaration would put an end to any more questions; but Glenarvan continued: 'Ayrton, I'm not your judge, and I do not ask you to say anything that might compromise you; all I want is for you to put me on the trail I have lost. Will you speak?'

Ayrton shook his head.

'Will you tell me where Captain Grant is?' Glenarvan pressed him.

'No, my lord,' Ayrton replied.

'Will you tell *where* the *Britannia* was wrecked?'

'No.'

'Ayrton,' said Glenarvan, almost in supplicating tones, 'if you

know where Captain Grant is, at at least you will tell his poor children.'

Ayrton hesitated. His features softened, but in a low voice he murmured 'I cannot, my lord.'

Then he added, with violence, as if he had reproached himself for a moment's weakness: 'No! I won't say! Hang me if you like!'

'Hang you!' Glenarvan cried angrily.

Then calming himself, he answered gravely—

'Ayrton, there is neither judge nor executioner here. At the first port we come to you shall be put into the hands of the authorities.'

'That is what I wish,' the quartermaster replied.

He returned at once to the cabin which served as his prison, and two sailors were placed at the door, with orders to watch over his every movement.

As owing to Ayrton's obstinacy Glenarvan had failed, what was to be done? It was clear that they must return to Europe, and afterwards set out again on this hitherto unsuccessful enterprise. All traces of the *Britannia* seemed irrevocably lost; no other interpretation of the document found in the bottle was possible: there was no other country on the 37th parallel, and there was nothing for the *Duncan* to do but to return.

After Glenarvan had consulted his friends, he asked John Mangles about the return voyage. The captain had found that he had only enough coal left for a fortnight at the most, so that he would soon have to touch somewhere for fuel. So he proposed to sail for Talcahuano Bay, where the *Duncan* had revictualled before beginning her voyage of circumnavigation, a direct course along the 37th parallel. After that the yacht, well provisioned, could double Cape Horn, and return to Scotland by the Atlantic route.

This plan was adopted, and half an hour later the yacht was under steam for Talcahuano in a sea worthy of the name of Pacific. At six that evening, the last mountains of New Zealand were disappearing in the mists of the horizon.

The return voyage had begun. And the expedition, so joyful at setting out, so confident at its beginning, but now vanquished and discouraged, were making their sad way back to Europe. Ayrton

was the only man who could give them any hope, and it is only too clear how unsuccessful Glenarvan had been in getting information from him.

Seeing her husband's failure, Lady Glenarvan asked his permission to try her influence on the quartermaster. Might it not be like the hurricane in the fable, which could not tear the cloak from the shoulders of the traveller, though the first ray of sunshine could at once accomplish the task?

Glenarvan, knowing how intelligent his young wife was, gave her leave to do as she wished. So that day then, 5th of March, Ayrton had an interview with Lady Glenarvan. Mary Grant was present, for Helena thought the young girl might have great influence on him, and she wished to neglect no chance of success.

For an hour the two women remained closeted with the quartermaster of the *Britannia*, but their interview had no result.

They gave no details of the arguments they employed to persuade the convict to tell his secret, but when they left Ayrton, their faces showed great disappointment.

As the quartermaster was taken back to his cabin, the sailors greeted him with violent threats, which he received with a disdainful shrug, and Glenarvan and John Mangles were obliged to separate him from the infuriated crew.

But Lady Glenarvan did not give up her charitable purpose, and next day she went to Ayrton's cabin, to avoid the scenes his presence on deck excited. For two long hours the gentle good Scotswoman remained alone, face to face with the convict.

Glenarvan, a prey to nervous agitation, kept walking up and down before the cabin, divided between his wish to try every chance of success and his desire to spare his wife the painful interview. But this time when Lady Glenarvan appeared, her face wore a more hopeful look.

Glenarvan rushed towards her: 'Has he spoken?' he asked.

'No,' Lady Helena replied 'but he wants to see you.'

'Then you've succeeded, Helena?'

'I hope so, Edward.'

'Have you made any promise in my name?'

'Yes, one, that you will do everything you can to mitigate his punishment.'

'Very well, dear, I'll send for Ayrton at once.'

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BARGAIN

AYRTON WAS escorted into Lord Glenarvan's presence.

'You wished to speak to me, Ayrton?' asked Glenarvan.

'Yes, my lord,' replied the quartermaster.

'To me alone?'

'Yes; but I think it would be better if Major MacNabbs and Mr. Paganel were present.'

'Better for whom?'

'For me.' Ayrton was speaking quite calmly.

Glenarvan looked fixedly at him; then he sent for MacNabbs and Paganel. 'We're ready to hear you,' he began as soon as his two friends had joined him at the saloon table.

Ayrton seemed to collect his thoughts for a few moments; then he said: 'My Lord, it is customary for witnesses to be present at every contract, or transaction, between two parties. That is why I asked for Major MacNabbs and Mr. Paganel to be here. For, to speak plainly, it is a bargain I am going to offer you.'

Glenarvan, well accustomed to Ayrton's manner, was unmoved, although to mention a bargain between this man and himself seemed very strange. 'What is this bargain?' he asked.

'It is this,' answered Ayrton. 'You want to learn certain details from me which may be useful to you. I want to obtain from you certain advantages which will be valuable to me.'

'What details?' asked Paganel.

'No,' Glenarvan corrected him, 'what advantages?'

'These are the advantages I want,' Ayrton replied. 'You still mean to put me into the hands of the English authorities?'

'Yes, Ayrton, it's only just.'

'I don't say it isn't,' the quartermaster replied quietly. 'So you wouldn't agree to give me my liberty?'

Glenarvan hesitated before replying. Upon his answer the fate of Captain Grant might depend, but his loyalty to justice triumphed and he replied: 'No, Ayrton, I cannot set you free.'

'I'm not asking for that' was the quartermaster's defiant reply.

'What do you want then?'

'Something midway between the gallows that awaits me and the freedom you won't give me.'

'And that is?'

'To leave me on one of the desert islands of the Pacific, with a small supply of food. I'll get out of the difficulty the best way I can, and I'll repent if I have time.'

Glenarvan, unprepared for this suggestion, looked at his two friends, but they kept silence. After a few minutes' reflection, he replied: 'Ayrton, if I grant your request, will you tell me all I want to know?'

'Yes, my lord, everything I know about Captain Grant and the *Britannia*.'

'The whole truth?'

'The whole truth?'

'But who's to vouch for it?'

'Oh, I see what's worrying you, my lord. There's nothing for it but to depend on my word—on the word of a felon! But that cannot be helped. That's how things are. You'll have to take your chance.'

'I'll trust your word, Ayrton,' Glenarvan decided.

'And you are right, my lord. Besides, if I deceive you, you have always the means of getting your revenge.'

'How?'

'By having me picked up from the desert island.'

Ayrton had answered all objections.

'I have one other thing to tell you,' he continued; 'I know very little about Captain Grant.'

'Very little!' protested Glenarvan.

'Yes, my lord, the details I can give you relate to myself; they won't help much to put you on the track you've lost.'

Glenarvan and the major could not help showing great disappointment. They thought the quartermaster held some important secret, and he had confessed that his revelations would be all but useless. But they were pleased at his frankness, especially when he added: 'So you've been warned, my lord, that this bargain will be less of an advantage to you than to me.'

'No matter,' replied Glenarvan. 'I accept your proposal, Ayrton. You have my promise that you shall be landed on one of the islands in the Pacific Ocean.'

'All right, my lord,' said Ayrton.

Was this strange man pleased at the decision? It might have been doubted, for his face showed no emotion. It seemed as though he were negotiating for somebody else, and not for himself.

'I'm ready to answer you,' he said.

'We have only a few questions to ask you,' said Glenarvan. 'Tell us all you know, Ayrton, and begin by saying exactly who you are.'

'Gentlemen,' answered Ayrton, 'I really am Tom Ayrton, quartermaster of the *Britannia*. I left Glasgow in Captain Grant's ship on the twelfth of March, eighteen sixty one. For fourteen months we cruised about in the Pacific, looking for some likely spot to found a colony. Captain Grant was just the man to undertake great things, but we often had arguments. His character didn't suit me. I don't know how to give in; but with Captain Grant, when once his resolution is taken, all resistance is impossible. Nevertheless, I dared to call a meeting. I tried to persuade the crew to join me, and help me to seize the ship. Whether I was right or wrong is no matter. Captain Grant did not hesitate, and on the eighth of April the next year, he landed me on the west coast of Australia.'

'Australia!' the major, interrupted Ayrton's narrative, 'so you left the *Britannia* before she touched at Callao, where we had our last news of her?'

'Yes,' the quartermaster replied, 'for the *Britannia* did not touch at Callao while I was on board. And though I mentioned Callao to you at Paddy O'Moore's farm, it was from yourselves that I heard about it.'

'Go on, Ayrton,' Glenarvan told him.

'So I found myself abandoned upon an almost desert coast, but only twenty miles from the convict establishments at Perth. Wandering along the shores, I met with a gang of convicts who had just escaped. I joined them. I need not give you all the particulars of my life, my lord, during the next two years and a half. It is enough to say that I became the chief of the convict band under the name of Ben Joyce. In September 'sixty-four, I called at the Irishman's farm. I was employed as a stockman under my true

name of Ayrton, and I waited there in the hope of being able to seize some ship.

‘Two months later the *Duncan* arrived. During your visit to the farm you related Captain Grant’s history, and I learnt that the *Britannia* had touched at Callao, that a document had been found in a bottle that the ship was lost at some point on the thirtyseventh parallel, and what serious reasons you had for looking for Captain Grant in Australia. I did not hesitate. I decided to steal the *Duncan*, a wonderful ship, which had out-distanced the fastest vessels in the British Navy. But she had some serious damage to repair.

‘I decided to let you sail for Melbourne, and I offered myself to you in my true character as quartermaster, meaning to lead you to the place where I said the shipwreck had happened, but which I had invented for the purpose on the east coast of Australia. So, sometimes followed at a distance and sometimes preceded by my band of convicts, I led your expedition through Victoria. My people committed a useless crime at Camden Bridge, as the *Duncan*, once she was on the coast, couldn’t get away, and with that yacht I should be master of the ocean.

‘I led you, without distrust on your part, as far as Snowy River, where the horses and oxen fell one by one, poisoned by gastrolobium. I made the waggon get stuck in the mud. At my suggestion—; but you know the rest, my lord; and you may be sure that, if it hadn’t been for Mr. Paganel’s absence of mind, I should now be in command on the *Duncan*.’

‘That’s my history; you see that, unfortunately, I cannot tell you anything that will put you upon Captain Grant’s track, and in dealing with me you’ve made a bad bargain.’

Ayrton was silent; he crossed his arms, and waited. Glenarvan and his friends also kept silent. They felt that this strange felon had told them the truth. He had only missed seizing upon the *Duncan* by accident. His accomplices had come to the shores of Twofold Bay, as Glenarvan knew from the old convict garment he had found there. There, faithful to the orders of their chief, they had watched for the yacht, and at last, weary of waiting, they had no doubt gone back to their trade of pillaging and burning in New South Wales.

The major questioned Ayrton so as to get the precise dates about the *Britannia*.

'Then,' he said, 'it was really on the eighth of April, eighteen sixtytwo that you landed on the west coast of Australia?'

'Yes,' answered Ayrton.

'And do you know what Captain Grant meant to do after that?'

'I don't know much about it.'

'Say what you do know, Ayrton,' said Glenarvan. 'The slightest indication might be useful to us.'

'All that I know, my lord,' answered the quartermaster, 'is, that Captain Grant meant to go to New Zealand, and he probably sailed for that country after leaving Callao. This agrees with the date given in the document as the time the *Britannia* was wrecked.'

'Evidently,' Paganel agreed.

'But,' Glenarvan pointed out, 'there was nothing else in what was left of the document that could refer to New Zealand.'

'I don't know anything about that,' said the quartermaster.

'Well, Ayrton,' Glenarvan decided, 'you've kept your word, and I will keep mine. We must decide on what island in the Pacific you are to be left.'

'Oh, that doesn't matter, my lord,' answered Ayrton.

'Return to your cabin,' said Glenarvan, 'and wait for our decision.'

The quartermaster was taken away, guarded by two sailors.

'Something might have been made of that fellow,' the major commented.

'Yes,' Glenarvan agreed. 'He's a self-reliant and intelligent man. What a pity that he should use all his powers for evil!'

'But Captain Grant?'

'I fear we must give up all hope of finding him. Poor children, who can tell them where to find their father?'

'I,' exclaimed Paganel. 'Yes, I can!'

No one could help noticing that the geographer, usually so loquacious and so impatient, had scarcely spoken during the cross-examination of Ayrton. These few words of his were more important than many others, and Glenarvan exclaimed in astonishment—'You, Paganel! You know where Captain Grant is?'

'Yes, I know as much as any one can,' answered the geographer.

'How do you know?'

'From the document.'

'Ah!' said the major, in a tone of complete incredulity.

'Listen first, MacNabbs,' Paganel told him, 'and shrug your shoulders later. I did not speak sooner because you would not have believed me. But I have decided to speak today, because Ayrton's opinion is precisely the same as mine.'

'So New Zealand—' asked Glenarvan.

'Listen, and judge,' Paganel continued. 'It was not without reason, or rather it was not without some reason, that I committed the mistake which saved us. At the time when I wrote that letter, under Glenarvan's dictation, the word New Zealand was running in my head. You remember that we were in the waggon. MacNabbs had just been telling Lady Glenarvan the history of the convicts; he had given to her a copy of the *Australian and New Zealand Gazette*, in which there was an account of the catastrophe at Camden Bridge. But just at the moment I was writing, the paper had slipped to the ground, and it was folded in such a way that only a few syllables of its title were to be seen. These two syllables were "aland". And it flashed upon me all at once that this was the termination of the word Zealand! "Aland" was one of the words in the document, and we had put a different interpretation to it.'

Paganel's interpretation was admissible, but it might be false. But Glenarvan and the major did not attempt to dispute it. Since no trace of the *Britannia* was to be found on the coasts of Patagonia or Australia, at that point where the two countries are crossed by the 37th parallel, the chances were in favour of New Zealand.

Paganel's statement impressed his friends.

'Now, Paganel,' Glenarvan asked him, 'tell me why you have kept this interpretation secret so long.'

'Because I didn't want to give you vain hopes. Besides, we were going to Auckland, just at the latitude indicated in the document.'

'But since then, when we had to leave the route, why didn't you speak?'

‘Because, however correct the interpretation might be, it could not lead to Captain Grant’s safety.’

‘How was that, Paganel?’

‘Because, it having been agreed that Captain Grant was wrecked on the coast of New Zealand, it must follow, from his not having been heard of for two years, that he’d fallen a victim either to the shipwreck or to the natives.’

‘Then your opinion is—’ began Glenarvan.

‘That we may, perhaps, find some vestiges of the wreck, but that the shipwrecked men are irretrievably lost.’

‘Say nothing of this, my friends,’ said Glenarvan, ‘and let me choose the moment to tell Captain Grant’s children.’

CHAPTER XIX

A CRY IN THE NIGHT

THE CREW soon learned that Ayrton’s explanation had thrown no light on Captain Grant’s whereabouts. Their disappointment was very great, for they had counted on the quartermaster, and it was now clear that the man knew nothing that could put the *Duncan* on the track of the *Britannia*. So the yacht still kept on her course. The next thing was to choose the island on which Ayrton was to be marooned.

Paganel and John Mangles consulted the map. Exactly upon the 37th parallel was an island, known under the name of Maria Theresa. It was 3,500 miles from the coast of America, and 1,500 miles from New Zealand. No ship ever touched at this solitary island and no echo from the world ever reached it; only the birds rested there during their long flights, and many maps did not even indicate this rocky spot, washed by the waves of the Pacific.

If ever complete isolation could be met with in this world, it would be in this island. Ayrton was told what his situation would be, and he accepted it, apparently quite willing to live away from all human intercourse. So they sailed for Maria Theresa. A line drawn due westward from the *Duncan’s* present position would have passed through it.

Two days later, at two in the afternoon, land was sighted on the horizon. It was the *Maria Theresa*, low and long, hardly rising above the water. Thirty miles separated it from the yacht, which was cruising at sixteen knots.

Little by little the island appeared more clearly as the setting sun lit up some of its peaks.

At five John Mangles thought he could distinguish a faint smoke rising from it. 'Is it a volcano?' he asked Paganel, who, telescope in hand, was studying this new land.

'I don't know what to think,' answered the geographer. 'There's not much known about *Maria Theresa*. It wouldn't be surprising if its origin were due to some submarine convulsion, and it could be volcanic.'

'But,' said Glenarvan, 'if an eruption produced it, isn't it to be feared that an eruption will destroy it?'

'It's not very probable,' answered Paganel. 'Its existence has been known for several centuries, and that's a fair guarantee. When *Julia Island* emerged from the Mediterranean, it did not long remain above the water, and it disappeared a few months after its birth.'

'John,' said Glenarvan, 'can we land before night?'

'No, my lord. I dare not risk the *Duncan* in the dark upon an unknown shore.'

At eight *Maria Theresa*, although only five miles to windward, looked like a long shadow. The *Duncan* was still approaching the island. At nine a bright light appeared through the darkness. It was motionless and steady.

'Here's something to confirm the volcano,' Paganel was attentively scrutinising it.

'But,' John Mangles pointed out, 'at this distance we ought to hear the noise which always accompanies an eruption, and the wind isn't bringing any sound of it.'

'This volcano is burning,' Paganel summed it up, 'but it doesn't speak.'

'Ah!' exclaimed John Mangles, 'another fire! On the beach this time! Look! It's moving!'

John was right. A second light had appeared; sometimes it seemed to go out, and then to flare up again.

'The island must be inhabited?' Glenarvan suggested.

'So we can't leave the quartermaster there.

'No,' said the major; 'he would be an unacceptable present, even to the savages.'

At eleven the passengers and John Mangles went to their cabins. Only the man at the wheel and the sailors on watch stayed at their posts. Then Mary and Robert Grant came up on deck. They stood leaning over the side, and looking sadly at the phosphorescent light on the sea. Mary was thinking of Robert's future—Robert of Mary's. They were both wondering about their father. Was he still alive? Must they give up all hope?

'Mary,' Robert said, 'I haven't given up hope and I don't mean to! A man like our father would never die before having accomplished his mission.'

'Captain Mangles is still hopeful?' Mary asked.

'Yes,' answered Robert. 'He's a friend who will never abandon us. I shall be a sailor, shan't I, sister, a sailor to help him search for our father?'

'If you want to,' Mary agreed. 'But then we'll have to separate.'

'You won't be alone, Mary. My friend John Mangles told me so. Lady Glenarvan won't let you leave her. You are a woman, and you can accept benefits; but a man—father has told me a hundred times—a man ought to make his own way in life!'

Whilst they were talking thus, something very strange and apparently supernatural took place. The brother and sister, by one of these communications which united souls, simultaneously experienced the same hallucination. Through the sound of the waves, Mary and Robert thought they heard a voice, so sad and mournful that it made every fibre of their hearts tremble.

'Help! Help!' it cried.

'Mary,' said Robert, 'did you hear that?'

They leaned together over the side of the ship, listening intently, and peering into the darkness. But they saw nothing.

'Robert,' said Mary, pale with emotion, 'I thought—I thought—But we must be mistaken, Robert!'

Then a fresh cry reached them, and this time the illusion was such that the same cry was forced from both—

'Father! Father!'

This was too much for Mary Grant. Overcome by emotion, she fell fainting into Robert's arms.

'Help!' cried Robert. 'My sister! My father! Help!'

The sailors on watch hastened to them, and then John Mangles and Lady and Lord Glenarvan appeared on deck, suddenly aroused from their sleep.

'My sister's dead, and father's over there!' cried Robert, pointing across the waves.

No one could understand what he meant.

'Yes,' he repeated, 'father's there! I heard his voice! Mary heard it, too.'

At this moment Mary regained her senses and she too cried out. 'Father! Father's there! My lord! Lady Glenarvan!' she implored them clasping her hands. 'I tell you, father's there! I assure you I heard his voice rise from the waves like a lamentation, like a last farewell!'

The others realised that Mary and Robert had been the victims of an hallucination.

Taking Robert's hand Glenarvan asked: 'You heard your father's voice, my boy?'

'Yes, my lord. There, from amidst the waves, he cried—"Help! Help!"'

'Did you recognise his voice?'

'Yes, I knew his voice, my lord! My sister heard it and she recognised it, too! How could we both be deceived? Let us go to father's rescue! A boat! A boat!'

Glenarvan saw that he could not undeceive the poor boy. But he made a last attempt, and called to the man at the wheel.

'Hawkins,' he said, 'you were there when Miss Mary was so strangely attacked?'

'Yes, your lordship.'

'Did you see or hear anything?'

'Nothing whatever, your lordship.'

'You have heard what he says, Robert.'

'If it had been Hawkins' father,' answered the boy, with energy, 'he would have heard him. It was *my* father, my lord, *my* father!'

Robert's voice was stifled by sobs.

'Poor orphans!' said John Mangles, 'they've gone through terrible trials.'

'Yes,' Glenarvan agreed, 'it was their great grief that made them have that hallucination.'

'And both of them, too!' murmured Paganel, 'It's very strange!' Leaning over the sea, he gestured to his companions to keep silence while he listened attentively.

The silence was complete. He shouted as loud as he could, but nothing answered.

'It's very strange,' he said, as he went down to his cabin. 'Even the closest sympathy of thought and feeling doesn't explain such a phenomenon.'

Next morning, 8th of March, at five, the passengers, including Robert and Mary, were on deck, anxious to see the land they had scarcely perceived the night before. Telescopes were in great demand, as the yacht was only a mile from the shore, and with their help the smallest details could be seen.

Suddenly Robert shouted: he could see two men running down to the shore and waving a flag.

'The English flag!' John Mangles seized his telescope.

'So it is!' Paganel turned quickly towards Robert.

'My lord,' Robert was trembling with emotion, 'I must swim to that island if you don't have a boat lowered immediately. Oh, my lord, I ask you on my knees to let me be the first to land.'

Nobody on board dared speak. They were all thinking of the events of the previous night. Perhaps the children had not been mistaken after all. Yet they trembled at the idea of the horrible disappointment that might well be awaiting them.

A boat was at once lowered. Captain Grant's two children, with Glenarvan, John Mangles, and Paganel, got into it, six strong sailors being at the oars. When they were about twenty yards from the shore, Mary gave a loud cry—'Father!'

A man was standing on the shore between two other men. His tall, stalwart figure, his brave but gentle face, combined the leading characteristics of Mary and Robert. It was their father! It was Captain Grant!

The captain had heard Mary's cry. He extended his arms and dropped unconscious on the sand.

MARIA THERESA ISLAND

PEOPLE DO not die of joy, and the father was himself again before they had taken him on board the yacht. Words are powerless to paint the scene.

Captain Grant knelt as soon as he touched the deck. To him it represented the soil of his country, and the pious Scotsmen wished to thank the God who had delivered him. Then, turning towards Lord and Lady Glenarvan and their companions, he thanked them in a trembling voice. During the short journey from the island and the yacht, his children had told him the history of the *Duncan*. What an immense debt he had contracted towards this noble woman and her companions! From Lord Glenarvan himself to the least of his sailors all had suffered for him. Captain Grant expressed the gratitude with which his heart overflowed with so much simplicity and nobleness, his face was lighted up with an emotion so pure and so gentle, that all the crew felt themselves recompensed beyond their deserts. Even the impassible major had to wipe away a tear when no one was looking; and Paganel was weeping like a child who does not try even to hide its tears.

Captain Grant was never tired of looking at his daughter. He thought that she had grown beautiful, and he asked Lady Glenarvan to bear witness that it was not only his paternal love that made him think so. Then, turning towards his son, he said, 'How he has grown! He looks quite a man!' And he gave his two cherished children the caresses that had been accumulating in his heart during his two long years of absence.

Robert introduced him to all his friends, and managed to vary the actual words, although he had always to say the same thing: they had all been kindness itself to the two orphans. When it came to John Mangles' turn to be introduced, the young captain blushed like a girl, and his voice shook as he answered Mary's father.

Lady Glenarvan then gave Captain Grant a description of their journey, and made him proud of his son and daughter. He learned the exploits of the young hero; how the boy had already

paid back to Lord Glenarvan part of his father's debt. Then John Mangles spoke of Mary in such terms that Captain Grant, enlightened by a few words from Lady Glenarvan, put his daughter's hand into that of the brave young captain.

When all had been told, and repeated a thousand times, Glenarvan explained to Captain Grant all that concerned Ayrton. Grant confirmed what the quartermaster had said about his being landed on the Australian coast. 'He is a brave and intelligent man,' he added, 'but his passions overcame his judgment; may reflection and repentance bring him to a better state of mind!'

But before Ayrton was transferred to Maria Theresa, Captain Grant wanted to show his new friends his desert island. He invited them to visit his hut, and to sit at table with this Crusoe of the Pacific. His invitation was willingly accepted, Robert and Mary being most impatient to visit the lonely place where their father had so long dwelt.

A few hours sufficed to explore Captain Grant's domain. It was, properly speaking, the summit of a submarine mountain or plateau, whose basaltic rocks abound in volcanic debris and it had emerged, little by little, from the depths of the Pacific during the geological formation of the earth. This volcano had been extinct for many centuries, and, its crater having filled up, it formed an island emerging from the liquid plain. Then earth had accumulated upon it; the vegetable kingdom seized upon this new land; passing whalers had landed some domestic animals, including some goats and pigs, which had run wild and multiplied; and the three natural kingdoms were now represented on this solitary spot in the midst of this ocean.

When the shipwrecked men from the *Britannia* had taken refuge upon it, the hand of man came to regulate the efforts of nature. In two years and a half Captain Grant and his sailors had transformed their island. Several acres of land, cultivated with care, produced excellent vegetables.

The visitors reached the little house, shaded by verdant gum-trees; before its windows extended a glorious sea sparkling in the rays of the sun. Captain Grant had the table placed under the shade of the trees, and they all sat down to it. A goat's ham, 'nardou' bread, some bowls of milk, two or three heads of wild

endive, and some pure fresh water, formed the elements of this simple repast, worthy of the Arcadian shepherds.

'He isn't to be pitied, that rascal of an Ayrton,' Paganel commented. 'This island is a paradise.'

'Yes,' Captain Grant, replied, 'a paradise for three poor shipwrecked men that Heaven had preserved! But I regret that Maria Theresa isn't a large fertile island, with a river instead of a stream, and a port instead of a creek formed by the waves.'

'And why, captain?' asked Glenarvan.

'Because here I would have founded a colony that I would have given to Scotland.'

'Ah, Captain Grant,' said Glenarvan, 'so you haven't given up the idea that made you so popular in your own country?'

'No, my lord, and God has saved me by your aid only to allow me to accomplish it.'

Then, in the very island that had sheltered the shipwrecked men, Captain Grant told them his history during the last two long years.

'It was during the night of the twentysixth or twentyseventh June, eighteen sixtytwo, that the *Britannia*, disabled by six days of tempest, struck upon the rocks of this island. And nearly all my crew perished. Only my two sailors, Bob Learce, Joe Bell and I succeeded in reaching the shore, after many unsuccessful attempts. The land which received us was only a desert island, two miles long by five wide, with about thirty trees in the interior, plenty of grass, and a stream of fresh water, which happily never dried up.

'Alone with my two sailors in this corner of the world, I did not despair: I put my confidence in God, and prepared to struggle bravely. Bob and Joe, my brave companions in misfortune, my friends, seconded me energetically. We began, with Daniel Defoe's *Crusoe* as our model, to collect spars from the ship, tools, weapons, and powder, and a precious bag of seeds. The first days were painful, but soon hunting and fishing provided us with food, for there were wild beasts on the island, and marine animals abounded on the shore. Little by little our existence was organised. I knew the exact situation of the island by means of my instruments, which I had managed to save from the wreck. The

bearings showed us that we were out of the course of any ships, and we could not be picked up, except by a providential chance.

‘However, we worked on resolutely. Soon many acres of land were sown with the seed from the *Britannia*; potatoes, endive, sorrel, and many other vegetables grew luxuriantly. We caught one or two goats, which soon became tame. We had milk and butter. The nardou, which grew in the dried-up creeks, furnished us with a kind of bread, and thus our daily needs were well supplied.

‘We had constructed a house of planks from the debris of the *Britannia*; we covered it with sails, carefully tarred, and under this solid shelter we passed the rainy season pretty comfortably. We discussed many plans and many dreams, the best of which has just been realised. I had at first an idea of daring the sea in a boat made with spars from the ship, but fifteen hundred miles separated us from the nearest land. No boat could have stood such a long journey. So I gave it up, and I never expected to be saved, except by Divine intervention.

‘Oh! My poor children, how many times have we looked out for ships in the distance, from the tops of the rocks on the shore. During all the time that our exile lasted, only two or three ships appeared upon the horizon, and as quickly disappeared! So two years and a half passed away. We hoped for nothing, and yet we did not despair.

‘At last, yesterday morning, I was standing upon the highest point in the island when I caught sight of smoke in the west. It increased. Soon a ship became visible. It seemed to be coming towards us; but would it not avoid this little island, which could offer it no harbour to put into? Ah! What a day of anguish! My companions lighted a fire on one of the peaks. Night came, but the yacht made no sign of having seen us.

‘I could no longer hesitate. Darkness was coming on. The ship might double the island during the night. I threw myself in the sea, and swam with almost superhuman vigour. I was approaching the yacht, and was scarcely thirty yards from her when she put about. Then I uttered those desperate cries which only my children heard, and which were no illusion.

‘I returned to the shore exhausted by emotion and fatigue. My two companions received me half-dead. The last night we passed

'if the island was horrible, and we believed ourselves abandoned for ever. When daylight came I saw the yacht, and your boat being lowered. The rest you know.'

But what was Paganel thinking about while Captain Grant was telling them his experiences? He kept turning over in his mind the words of the documents. He recalled the three interpretations he had placed on them—all of them false! How had Maria Theresa Island been indicated on those sea-worn bits of paper?

At last he could no longer contain himself.

'Captain,' he exclaimed, 'please tell me just what you put in your incomprehensible document? Do you remember your exact words?'

'I can remember them exactly, for never a day has passed without my recalling them.'

'And what were they, Captain?' asked Glenarvan. 'We're all anxious to know!'

'You'll remember,' Captain Grant began, 'that I put three pieces of paper into the bottle, in three different languages. Which do you want to know?'

'Then they weren't identical?' Paganel enquired.

'Yes, almost to a word.'

'Then quote the French document' Glenarvan suggested.

'That's the one which the waves had most respected, and we used it as the basis of our interpretation.'

'Here it is, word for word:

"Le 27 juin 1862, le trois-mâts Britannia, de Glasgow, s'est perdu à quinze cents lieues de la Patagonie, dans l'hémisphère austral. Portés à terre, deux matelots et le capitaine Grant ont atteint l'île Tabor . . ."

Paganel gave an exclamation of surprise.

"Là" Grant went on, "continuellement en proie à une cruelle indigence, ils ont jeté le document par 153° de longitude et 37° 11' de latitude. Venez à leur secours ou ils sont perdus."

At the word Tabor, Paganel had jumped up: then, once more unable to contain himself, he protested:

'Tabor Island! But it's Maria Theresa Island!'

'Of course, Mr. Paganel,' Grant reminded him, 'Maria Theresa on the English and German maps, but Tabor on the French!'

Just then a terrible blow fell on Paganel's shoulder. Truth com-

pels it to be confessed that this was dealt by the Major, who for the first time had lost his habitual impassibility.

‘Geography!’ he said in scornful tones.

But Paganel had not even felt his hand. What was that, after the geographical blow that had felled him?

And so, from what Captain Grant had told him, he had gradually got nearer the truth! He had deciphered almost the whole of the indecipherable document! The names of Patagonia, Australia, New Zealand had seemed in turn to be absolutely certain. *Contin*, at first read as ‘continent’, now appeared as meaning ‘continual’, *Indi* had meant in turn ‘Indians’, ‘Natives’ (*Indigenes*) and at last ‘indigence’, its true meaning.

Only the incomplete word *abor* had baffled his intelligence. He had obstinately insisted that it was part of *aborder* (‘to land’) when really it was a proper name, the French name of Tabor Island, the refuge which had saved the *Britannia’s* castaways! That, admittedly, was an error difficult to avoid, as the English planispheres on the *Duncan* called that island Maria Theresa!

‘That doesn’t matter!’ Paganel tore frantically at his hair. ‘I ought not to have forgotten that double name! It’s an unpardonable mistake, an error unworthy of the Secretary of a Geographical Society! I’m dishonoured!’

‘But Mr. Paganel’ Lady Helena implored him, ‘don’t take it so to heart!’

‘No, your ladyship! I’m nothing but an ass!’

‘And not even a clever ass!’ commented the Major by way of consolation.

When the meal was over, Captain Grant put everything in order in his house. He carried nothing away with him, wishing that the guilty man should inherit the riches of the honest.

They returned on board. Glenarvan intended to start the same day, and gave orders for the quartermaster to be landed. Ayrton was brought up on deck, and found himself in Captain Grant’s presence.

‘It is I, Ayrton,’ Grant told him.

‘Yes, it’s you, captain,’ Ayrton replied without showing any astonishment. ‘Well, I’m not sorry to see you again in good health.’

'It seems, Ayrton, that I made a mistake in landing you in an inhabited country.'

'It does seem so, captain.'

'You're going to take my place on that desert island. May Heaven inspire you with repentance!'

'Amen!' Ayrton replied calmly.

Then Glenarvan asked him—'Then you persist in being left on that island?'

'Yes, my lord.'

'Now listen to my last words, Ayrton. Here you will be far away from the world, and you can't possibly have any communication with it. Miracles are rare, and you will not be able to leave the island when the *Duncan* has gone. You will be alone under the eye of God, but you will not be lost, nor out of knowledge, as Captain Grant was. However unworthy you may be of the remembrance of men, men will still remember you. I know where you are, Ayrton, and I shall know where to find you.'

'God bless your lordship!' was all that Ayrton said.

These were the last words exchanged between them.

The boat was ready and Ayrton got into it. John Mangles had already sent to the island some cases of preserved meat, some clothing, some tools, some arms, and a stock of powder and lead. Thus the quartermaster could regenerate himself by work; nothing was wanting to him, not even books, and amongst others the Bible.

The moment of separation was come. The crew and the passengers stood on deck and Mary Grant and Lady Glenarvan were unable to contain their emotion.

'Must it be done?' the young woman asked her husband. 'Must this unfortunate man be forsaken?'

'He must, Helena,' Lord Glenarvan spoke firmly. 'It is his expiation!'

The boat with John Mangles at the tiller now put off. Ayrton was standing bareheaded, and Glenarvan and all his crew uncovered their heads as before a man who is about to die. Then the boat moved off in complete silence.

Arrived at the island, Ayrton jumped on shore, and the boat returned to the yacht. It was then four in the afternoon and from

the deck the passengers could see the quartermaster standing like a statue upon a rock and looking at the ship.

'Shall we go, my lord?' asked John Mangles.

'Yes, John,' Glenarvan spoke quickly, more moved than he wished to appear.

'Go ahead!' John shouted to the engineer.

The yacht slowly moved away from the island, and by eight its last summits were disappearing in the shades of night.

CHAPTER XXI

FINAL EVIDENCE OF PAGANEL'S ABSENCE OF MIND

ELEVEN DAYS after leaving the island, the *Duncan* dropped anchor in the Bay of Talcahuano, and after revictualling she made the best of her way homewards. No voyage had fewer incidents; the yacht was bearing a cargo of happiness, and there seemed to be no secret on board, not even the feelings of John Mangles for Mary Grant.

There was, however, one which greatly excited the major's curiosity. Why was Paganel always muffled up to his chin? The major was dying to know, but neither questions, allusions, nor hints succeeded in solving the mystery. Not even when the *Duncan* crossed the line did Paganel take off any of his wrappings. 'He's so absent-minded that he thinks he's at St. Petersburg,' the major commented, seeing the geographer still enveloped in a great coat, as if the mercury had been frozen in the thermometer.

On 10th May, the *Duncan* entered the Firth of Clyde. At eleven in the morning she anchored at Dumbarton, and at two her passengers were entering Malcolm Castle amidst the cheers of the Highlanders.

Now a few words about the learned geographer, whose absence of mind became proverbial in Scotland.

An amiable lady of thirty, Major MacNabb's cousin, a trifle eccentric herself, but still charming, fell in love with the geographer and offered him her hand, with several thousand in it.

Paganel was far from being insensible to the sentiments of Miss Arabella, but he dared not accept. The major, who was the messenger between these two hearts, made for one another, told Paganel that this marriage was the last absence of mind he should allow him.

'Doesn't Miss Arabella please you?' MacNabbs kept asking him.

'Oh, major, she's charming!' cried Paganel. 'A thousand times too charming! And, to tell you the truth, I wish she had one fault.'

'Make yourself easy on that score,' the major assured him. 'She has plenty. The most perfect woman has always her supply. Is it settled, Paganel?'

'I dare not,' Paganel repeated.

'Come my learned friend, why are you hesitating?'

'I am unworthy of Miss Arabella,' answered Paganel invariably.

But at last, one day, pushed to extremities by the persevering major, he ended by confiding a secret to him, which, if ever the police were after him, would facilitate his capture.

'Bah!' the major ejaculated.

'It is so, I assure you!' cried Paganel.

'Well, what does that matter? That will only add to your personal merits, and it will make you the man of Arabella's dreams.'

The major, keeping an imperturbable gravity, left Paganel a prey to the most poignant anxiety. At last a short interview took place between MacNabbs and Miss Arabella. A fortnight later a marriage was celebrated with great ceremony in the chapel of Malcolm Castle. Paganel was magnificent, though still closely buttoned up, and Miss Arabella resplendent.

This secret of the geographer's would have always remained in the depths of the unknown if the major had not told it to Glenarvan, who told his wife, who told Mrs. Mangles. At last it reached the ears of Mrs. Olbinett, and became common property. During the three days of his captivity amongst the Maoris, Jacques Paganel had been tattooed from head to foot, and on his chest was the image of an heraldic kiwi with outspread wings!

